

The Final Rebellion

Thy Kingdom Come – Part VIII

Revelation 20:7-10

Introduction

Conventions and ceremonies were held around the world under the direction of the Global Peace Festival. Delegates from countries all over the globe converged last year on Taiwan where elaborate ceremonies were held and speeches were delivered from dignitaries. The ceremonies took place simultaneously at different locations involving and including hundreds of thousands of people.

This peace initiative which will hold ceremonies this year in nearly a dozen countries, including the United States, preaches a message that global peace can come if we commit ourselves to family, acts of service, and interfaith dialogue. “Interfaith dialogue” is a politically correct way of saying that one religion should not try to evangelize another – we should leave everyone alone.

This is exactly what the apostle Paul did not do when he visited Athens and saw all the monuments to all the gods, including one monument “to an unknown god” (Acts 17:23). Paul immediately gained an audience and introduced Athens to the true identity of this unknown God. He then warned them of the coming judgment of this God through Jesus Christ. So much for interfaith dialogue.

I did a little research and learned that the Global Peace Festival flies under the banner “One Family under God”. This is their motto.

This sounds pretty good, right? However, one leader in the movement was clear – and on record – that God can be interpreted to mean any god a person so desires. The important thing, I guess, is that everyone has one.

I dug a little deeper and discovered that the underpinning of the Global Peace Festival is the Unification Church of Reverend Sun Yung Moon, whose son now leads it.

“One Family under God” is really interpreted, “One Family under any God but the Bible’s God”.

This is the point at which Christianity becomes the problem, is it not? The core belief of Christianity is that Christ is the one and only true, living God – resurrected and returning.

Global peace will finally arrive on the heels of this Prince of Peace.

Do you remember a little song entitled “Oh Buddha!” from 1979?

No, it won't be old Buddha that's sitting on the throne

And it won't be old Mohammed that's calling us home

And it won't be Hare Krishna that plays that trumpet tune

And we're going to see the Son not Reverend Moon!

Who would have ever thought this old song would be so current? We should teach it to a brand new generation.

The growth of peace movements capture the imagination of mankind, do they not? There is something in the heart of mankind that longs for world peace – the golden age.

This time will come! It will come at last, following the return of Jesus Christ to planet Earth with His beloved to reign from the city of gold for one thousand years.

The apostle John has already revealed this much to us in Revelation chapter 20. Verse 6 summarizes the glory of this golden age.

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Now, why *does* God introduce a thousand year reign? Why does He not move from the Tribulation immediately into the new heaven and the new earth? Why does He put off heaven for another thousand years? Why does He bother with a millennial kingdom – a thousand-year kingdom?

Reasons for the Millennial Kingdom

Let me briefly give five reasons for the millennial kingdom.

1. First, the millennial kingdom will occur in order for God to fulfill His literal promises to Israel to restore their land to them as a redeemed nation (Genesis 15 and Jeremiah 30:5-8). It will be during this thousand year time that the desert will blossom as a rose (Isaiah 35:1) and the reconstituted nation of Israel will occupy the land without disturbance.
2. Secondly, the millennial kingdom, the thousand year reign of Christ from Jerusalem, will be Christ's way of fulfilling His promises to Israel and the church. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians of their future, and ours, revealing that believers will one day judge the world (I Corinthians 6:2). Christ also promised the church, in Revelation 3:21, that she would reign with Him on His glorious throne.
3. Thirdly, the millennial kingdom will fulfill the promises of God the Father to God the Son (Psalm 2). The Father has appointed His Son to reign and has already promised to give Him the nations as His inheritance. Satan tempted Christ by offering to give Him the kingdoms of the world and bypass the cross and suffering (Matthew 4:8-9). But Christ knew Satan's offer was nothing but sawdust and sand. The kingdoms of the world will be His inheritance according to divine plans and will display the vindication and glory of Christ.
4. Fourthly, the literal millennial reign will occur to provide an answer to the prayers of the saints of all ages who have been looking for a city constructed without human hands and a kingdom ruled by sovereign God. From Abraham's time until today, believers have been praying, "Thy kingdom come." It will come – literally, physically.
5. Lastly, the millennial kingdom will exist to ultimately demonstrate beyond any doubt and denial that mankind is utterly sinful and without excuse. Apart from the grace of God, man will choose to listen to the serpent and eat the forbidden fruit; mankind is naturally in rebellion against the rule of God.

In our last study, Satan was incarcerated and the Savior was coroneted – the golden age had begun. It began with the saints returning with Christ to establish His kingdom. This would include you, as a believer, the church, Old Testament saints, and martyred Tribulation saints who will make up the immortal, glorified co-regents reigning with Christ.

Those who survive the Tribulation – and there will be millions who do – and who also believe the gospel of Christ will enter the kingdom as subjects. The nation of Israel will be included among those who believe as they see their Messiah returning in the sky and experience a national conversion (Zechariah 12:10).

Only the redeemed – Christ's followers – are allowed to enter. Matthew 25 informs us that those who do not believe in Christ will be condemned to await their final judgment. We will study this in our next discussion.

To review:

- no unsaved person will enter the millennial kingdom;
- all who survive and believe in Christ for whom He said He is – “. . . the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through [Him]” (John 14:6) – will enter the kingdom.

Tribulation believers, although converted, will still have their sin nature. They are redeemed and secure in Christ – they cannot lose their position as subjects of His kingdom any more than you can lose your position as members of Christ's body – however, they will still have their sin nature as mortals and will pass along that sin nature to their children, as it has been passed along since Adam's fall.

Each successive generation will need to hear and respond to the gospel of salvation through Christ the reigning Lord.ⁱ

What a great time this will be for evangelism! The millennial temple will hold annual sacrifices as memorials to the Lamb of God and communion, as we know it, will also be celebrated – for Christ promised His church that He would drink the memorial cup with us in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29).

Imagine the visual aids to the gospel. The sacrifices will be held annually in Jerusalem to picture Christ's sacrifice for our sin and the communion cup and bread will illustrate the memorial of the New Testament church. We will not

be introducing people to an invisible God, by the way, but to a visible reigning Savior. We will see at the top of the golden city the glory of His throne!

I agree with evangelical Bible scholars who say that these annual sacrifices will be opportunities for the nations to come and see Jesus Christ – their willing, gracious Redeemer – personally and physically.

What a time this will be to be alive – as a glorified immortal reigning with Christ, or even as a mortal subject of the kingdom. What an amazing kingdom it will be.

Aspects of the Millennial Kingdom

Let us look some of the aspects of the millennial kingdom.

1. There will be a perfect government system in the millennial kingdom.

There will be no bribery, no corruption, no greed, no dishonesty, no immorality, and no self-serving among government officials.

There will be no elections either. Imagine that! The glorified saints will occupy the positions of authority around the world as co-regents with Christ, who reigns on the earth (Revelation 5:10).

2. There will be a pristine environment in the millennial kingdom.

Christ's return changes everything back to Eden-like systems.

Pollution will become a problem of the past; natural resources will revert back to the purity of early creation, rain will be abundant (Isaiah 30:23), and the land will reflect the glory of God (Isaiah 35:1-2).ⁱⁱ

All the animals will become herbivores once again, as they were in the garden of Eden. Isaiah the prophet wrote these amazing words:

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat, and the calf and the young lion [will feed] together; and a little boy will lead them [they will be his playmates].

Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

(Isaiah 11:6-7)

The curse is only partially lifted because there will still be death; animals will still die.ⁱⁱⁱ

There will be animal sacrifices in the temple and these sacrifices will be eaten by the priests. This implies that we will still be able to enjoy eating meat – and you can still enjoy eating vegetables.

The animals, however, will no longer be a threat. Instead, they will be for the sheer enjoyment, pleasure, and exploration of mankind, and a demonstration of the creative glory of God.

A young boy came to me after the last service and asked me if our pets are going to be in heaven. I told him that I believe Isaiah makes it pretty clear that there will be animals to play with and enjoy and he might end up with any number of amazing pets. However, I had to tell him that we do not have any biblical indication that *our* pets will be in heaven, no matter how many times they may have been blessed at some church.

I read an interesting article recently that said that the pets of Christians get to go to heaven. This is really bad theology. In fact, I have had some pets I would rather *not* see in heaven, if it is all the same to you. They would ruin heaven for me if they followed me around.

If the pets of believers go to heaven, then where do the pets of unbelievers go? Bad theology makes things worse, not better.

We do know that animals will no longer be predators. Instead, they will be tame enough that we will be able to play with even the wildest of animals – from the dinosaur to the leopard to the cobra.

In the millennial kingdom there will be a perfect government and a pristine environment.

3. There will be prolonged life spans in the millennial kingdom.

The mortals who are born and live during the time of this kingdom will live such long lives that a one-hundred-year-old man will be considered young (Isaiah 65:20).

Again, the millennial kingdom will reflect many of the conditions of early creation. There will be a return to the life spans of Adam, who lived 930 years, and Kenan, who lived 910 years, and Lamech, who lived 777 years (Genesis 5).

All of this implies there will be a return to the protective climates and conditions of life following the garden of Eden.

4. There will be pronounced health improvements in the millennial kingdom.

The prophets reveal that the mortal subjects of this kingdom will never say they are sick and those who enter the kingdom with sicknesses or disabilities will be healed (Isaiah 33:24).

Isaiah writes of this glorious kingdom:

. . . the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

. . . the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy . . .

(Isaiah 35:5-6)

In the millennial kingdom, there will be perfect government, pristine environment, prolonged life spans, and pronounced health improvements for mortals.

5. There will be profuse resources in the millennial kingdom.

The kingdom will be a time of unparalleled abundance and prosperity. Everything the prosperity preachers have been misinterpreting for our current age is intended for the age of the millennial kingdom (Joel 2 and Amos 9).

The misinterpretations of these preachers have caused untold sorrow and confusion to many people who have been led to believe they just did not have enough faith.

This is the era of health, bounty, peace, dominion, and righteousness.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14)

6. There will be principled rulers in the millennial kingdom.

We confirmed immortals, no longer struggling with a sin nature that is, for us, forever gone, will rule and reign with perfect justice, balance, wisdom, and godly principle.

7. There will be the present and perceptible Savior King in the millennial kingdom.

This final aspect of the millennial kingdom that I will refer to is first and foremost in importance – I have saved the best for last.

We will have the ability to serve Him, not as we do now – an invisible Lord we struggle in our flesh and minds to understand and follow. There will be face-to-face communication, dedication, and appreciation. Imagine saying, “Thank you, Lord,” to

His face and hearing His commendation in return! There will be face-to-face devotion and adoration.

This is indeed the golden age. This is the world peace festival for us that will last a thousand years on planet Earth.

Surely the world will believe and follow Christ in these conditions, and no doubt billions will.

End of the Millennial Kingdom

The promised millennial kingdom will come to a close with this significant event in Revelation 20:7-8a,

When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations...

Wait a second! Hold on a moment! Satan does not escape from his prison – he is released. Why in the world would God let Satan loose? He should lock him up and throw away the key, right?!

God intends to prove that man has not changed from the garden to the kingdom. Mankind is ever ready to rebel – only needing an excuse; only needing a leader.

Look how quickly our own country has turned its back on the biblical morals and beliefs of our founding fathers. Many nationally held truths have been abandoned in less than three hundred years.

In two hundred fifty years we have gone from a nation that believed all men were created by God to a national disavowal of any notion of a creator God. In less than seven generations our national school system promotes the absolute absence of a creator, and anything having to do with the God of the Bible is prohibited.

Imagine what might happen in the minds and hearts of the unredeemed over the course of a thousand years. We have hints of trouble from the prophets, who tell us that rebels will face swift judgment. This implies a growing rebellion of unrepentant sinners (Psalm 2:9-10).

We are told by the prophet Zechariah that nations who refuse to come to Jerusalem for the annual worship of Christ will not receive rain upon their land (Zechariah 14:16-18).

In fact, Zechariah implies that Egypt will refuse over time to worship Christ as a nation (Zechariah 14:19).^{iv}

Mankind will simply love his sin more than the living, glorious Savior.^v

Imagine in this perfect society with pristine living conditions, prosperous health, and plenty of resources, mankind by the millions will be ready to follow the devil rather than Christ.^{vi}

This is the garden of Eden Part 2. Human nature has not changed from the garden to the kingdom.

Satan has not changed one bit either. As soon as his prison door swings open, he takes off to bring one more insult to the face of Christ. He already knows he is defeated, but he does not care.

What matters most to Satan is that he can deceive millions of people who are ready and waiting. He hates Christ more than ever. He loves, more than anything, to cause the created human race to raise its fist against creator God, just like he did at the beginning of time.

Robert Mounce said it this way: “A thousand years of confinement does not alter Satan’s plans – nor does a thousand years of [millennial conditions] change man’s basic tendency to rebel against his creator; nothing is altered by the mere passing of time.”^{vii}

There are twenty-five generations that will be born into the kingdom as mortals.

Children of believing parents during this church age can inwardly reject Christ and become gospel-hardened; likewise, children during the kingdom will become glory-hardened.^{viii}

In other words, “Yeah, yeah, we see the golden palace . . . Yeah, we took that field trip to Jerusalem a hundred seventy years ago . . . We see these immortals who claim they’ll live forever . . . We’ve heard all about the King and how He died for our sins three thousand years ago . . . So what? What right does He have to rule over me?”

The Serpent says, “You’re exactly right to feel that way . . . Why should Jesus Christ decide who lives in that house of gold?”

Satan has lost none of his cunning throughout the years. He knows exactly what to say and do to bring about one final rebellion because men are still men and sin is still sin, and he knows how to bring them together for this one last uprising.^{ix}

John writes, in Revelation 20:8, that Satan is able to recruit from . . .

. . . the four corners of the earth . . .

In other words, from the four points of the compass – north, south, east, and west.

John mentions, in verse 8, Gog and Magog, who are involved as well. They represent the Russian and

northern nations that have already marched against Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation period, as we learned in Revelation chapter 6.

Because these two unique names reappear, there are those who believe this battle in Revelation 20 is the same battle narrated in Ezekiel 38 and 39. However, on closer inspection, which we accomplished when we studied Revelation chapter 6, the Ezekiel battle is not the same as this battle in Revelation chapter 20.

The Ezekiel battle corresponds to the earlier battle in Revelation 6, which occurs during the early days of the Tribulation. This conflict in Revelation 20 takes place after the close of the millennial kingdom.

Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38 and 39 join other nations living around the Middle East. In Revelation chapter 20, the nations come from the four corners of the earth.

After the battle takes place in the Tribulation, according to Ezekiel, the dead will be buried. In Revelation 20, as we will see in a moment, the armies are instantly cremated as fire falls from heaven.^x

Gog and Magog are certainly literally included in this battle, but their names are emblematic of the enemies of Israel and her God, as they have been for thousands of years.

God is simply going to allow the unredeemed people on planet Earth one last gasp, one final fling to forever prove that the fallen nature of mankind is not partial, but total.

However, this really is not much of a battle – in reality it is a divine execution.^{xi}

Notice what John records in verse 9.

And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

Not one shot is fired. Not one sword is unsheathed. Suddenly, it will seem like the sky bursts into flames.

The armies whose number resembles the sand of the seashore have surrounded Jerusalem, and suddenly a falling ring of fire will surround the city radiating outward in all directions until all the armies are engulfed and destroyed by this descending, surging sea of flames.^{xii}

The final judgment is just moments away.

What the Final Rebellion Proves

What does the final rebellion prove? Let me give at least three truths.

1. A perfect Ruler does not guarantee a perfect heart!
2. A clean environment does not erase inward corruption!
3. Solving social problems does not solve the sin problem!

Mankind's biggest problem has never been external, but internal. Mankind has a heart condition, and his biggest problem is that his heart is corrupt and his nature is fallen.

Mankind must be redeemed. You can feed him, educate him, medicate him, insure him, heal him, clothe him, and employ him, but he still has a sinner's heart that needs to be redeemed because you are still going to have to bury him and after that, the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

Man's greatest problem is not the parents he went home with from the hospital. His real problem did not come from whether or not his mother breast fed him or bottle fed him – I do not care what you have read. Mankind's problem has nothing to do with how old he was when he learned to walk or whether he was in the seventy-fifth percentile of normal growth patterns or at the bottom of the chart. His problem has nothing to do with how old he was when he was potty trained and it is not related to the methods his parents used to potty train him – whether they bribed him, gave him candy, or got him a puppy. His biggest problem is not the school he was educated in, the neighborhood he grew up in, the family car he drove around in, or the job he had to work in. Man's biggest problem has never been *out there* – his biggest problem has always been *in here*.

The millennial kingdom will have perfect conditions. There will be perfect justice and balance and a perfect Law Giver on the throne. Yet this final rebellion will prove that although man might seem to conform to God's standard, his heart is disloyal and ready to rebel against the authority that holds him back.

Have you ever driven down the interstate and come upon a pack of cars in both lanes driving exactly fifty-five miles an hour? You might think, "What in the world is wrong with these people? Fifty-five miles an hour is a guideline. That speed limit sign means that's the *minimum* you should be driving, or you don't belong on the interstate."

After some time you see up ahead a Highway Patrol car taking an exit off the interstate and think, "Aha! That's what's going on."

As soon as the patrol drives up that exit ramp, what does everybody do – except you and me and a few other righteous people?

The presence of the law enforcer produced *conformity* to the law but not *loyalty* to the law's standard. And certainly not *love* for the law giver.

There has been outward conformity, but over time the King is way off in Jerusalem – "Maybe He can't see this far down the interstate. There are a lot of trees between us."

Have you ever wondered if radar can go through trees? I haven't!

This final rebellion will reveal that apart from God's saving grace, mankind will be unmoved by the peace, joy, righteousness, and glory of the millennial kingdom. As soon as they get the chance; as soon as they are deceived into believing they can overthrow the Ruler seated on the golden throne, they will march against Him.

They will fail in this final rebellion against God. Satan's doom is now finalized.

Before we wrap up our study, notice verse 10.

And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The verb "eblethe" (εβληθη), which is translated "thrown," is a prophetic aorist passive verb which may not sound all that interesting, but really is. It informs us that some unnamed agent throws the devil into this everlasting ocean of fire.^{xiii}

Who is this unnamed agent?

We are not told. We do know it would be someone empowered by God, and this would be enough to cast even Satan into hell.

Who would be given this amazing privilege of judgment?

I can only guess, of course, because the Bible does not tell us. You may be thinking that it really does not matter. However, I think it is worthy of consideration.

I do not think it is an angel because a representative of the angelic hosts has already been given the privilege of casting Satan into the abyss at the beginning of chapter 20. In that abyss, Satan has been confined during these past one thousand years.

What a fitting privilege this is for one of the angels who resisted the temptation of Satan to rebel against God at the beginning of creation, to have the representative honor of overpowering the highest cherub and putting him into prison.

An angel has already had his moment. I do not think it would be an angel here.

I do not think it is Christ either. It is His word alone that has the power to cast Satan into hell, and yet God has chosen someone to carry out His word of judgment.

If the agent is not a representative of the Triune God or the angelic hosts, who is left?

The human race.

What human being would best represent the human race in casting Satan away for good?

Adam! What better representative of the human race to carry out this task than the first human created and the representative of fallen, defeated, dying humanity?

It was Adam and Eve who were the first to hear the serpent's words of defiance.

"Eve, you were deceived by this serpent . . . Adam, you knowingly rebelled."

Imagine living for thousands of years, forgiven but with the understanding that it was *you* who opened the door for sin, sorrow, and death to enter the human race. Imagine living for thousands of years with your name attached to sin – Adam's sin; Adam's nature; the fall of Adam.

This was part of God's plan all along for the glory of His grace and for His plan of redemption.

At the end of this final rebellion, what better person to end Satan's grasp on humanity than the human being whose sin began it all.

I hope it is Adam. I would love to see Adam – the representative of all of us who have spent our lives under the curse and in the battle – our human father who failed, cast Satan away forever. What a moment of triumph for us all that would be.

We do not know if it is Adam, but we do know that it ends – this is Satan's everlasting doom and the last time he will ever be seen by the redeemed again.

My friends, when Satan comes along and begins to remind you of your present or your past, remind him of his future.^{xiv}

You, a sinner, a son or daughter of Adam and Eve, have sinned; you have also rebelled. However, through Christ your gracious, sovereign, atoning

King, you have been forgiven – you have been redeemed.

So when Satan comes along and reminds you of your sinful past and your stumbling present, remind him of his future!

ⁱ John MacArthur, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 2000), p. 239.

ⁱⁱ John Walvoord, The Millennial Kingdom (Zondervan, 1959), p. 317.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Henry M. Morris, The Revelation Record (Tyndale, 1986), p. 421.

^v MacArthur, p. 240.

^{vi} Stewart Custer, From Patmos to Paradise (BJU Press, 2004), p. 226.

^{vii} Robert Mounce, quoted in Life Application Bible Commentary, Revelation (Tyndale, 2000), p. 243.

^{viii} John Phillips, Exploring Revelation (Loizeaux Brothers, 1991), p. 240.

^{ix} Ibid.

^x Sam Gordon, Worthy is the Lamb: A Walk Through Revelation (Ambassador, 2000), p. 413.

^{xi} Alva J. McClain, The Greatness of the Kingdom (BMH Books, 1959), p. 508.

^{xii} Morris, p. 424.

^{xiii} Robert L. Thomas, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 1995), p. 426.

^{xiv} Daymond R. Duck and Larry Richards, The Smart Guide to the Bible: Revelation (Thomas Nelson, 2006), p. 306.