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# THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST

## The Mediatorial Reign of Jesus Christ on Earth

### Lesson #5

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#### I. THE MILLENNIUM DEFINED

- A. The thousand years during which Christ is to rule the world is popularly known as the millennium. . . The premillennial view accepts kingdom prophecies as literal, placing the return of Christ before the millennium is established. This will be earth's golden age, when all of God's promises concerning His future kingdom will be fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>
- B. The millennium or thousand year reign of Christ is also described as the mediatorial reign of Christ. In the Old Testament God often ruled His people through a mediator e.g., Moses, Joshua, David, etc. These men were God's representatives and God ruled His people through them. Ideally, God would instruct and rule the mediator and the mediator would instruct and rule the people. Right now Christ is ruling from His throne in heaven. True believers are His subjects on earth and we submit to and follow Christ our King. But a time will come when Jesus Christ returns to earth and sets up His throne in Jerusalem, establishing His kingdom on earth. He will be the perfect mediator between God and man, because He will be perfectly both God and man. He will be a perfect ruler establishing His kingdom in justice and righteousness.

#### II. SCRIPTURAL TEXTS ON THE MILLENNIUM

- A. Gen. 17:7-8 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."
- B. I Chron. 17:11-14 "Now, therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader over My people Israel. 8 "I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a name like the name of the great ones who are in the earth. 9 "I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and not be moved again; and the wicked will not waste them anymore as formerly, 10 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover, I tell you that the Lord will build a house for you. 11 "When your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up one of your descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 "He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you. 14 "But I will settle him in My house and in My kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever." ' "

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<sup>1</sup>Evans, William, and S. Maxwell Coder. The Great Doctrines of the Bible. Chicago: Moody Press, 1998, c1974, 304.

- C. **Isa. 2:2-4** Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.
- D. **Isa. 9:1-7** But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them. 3 You shall multiply the nation, You shall increase their gladness; They will be glad in Your presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4 For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. 5 For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire. 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.
- E. **Isa. 11:4-9** But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.
- F. **Isa. 27:12-13** In that day the Lord will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel. 13 It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.
- G. **Isa. 35:5-6** Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.
- H. **Isa. 65:17-25** "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. 18 "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing And her people for gladness. 19 "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. 20 "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be thought accursed. 21 "They will build houses and inhabit them; They will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 "They will not build and another inhabit, They will not plant and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, so will be the days of My people, And My chosen ones will wear out the work of their hands. 23 "They will not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the Lord, And their descendants with them. 24 "It will also come to pass that before

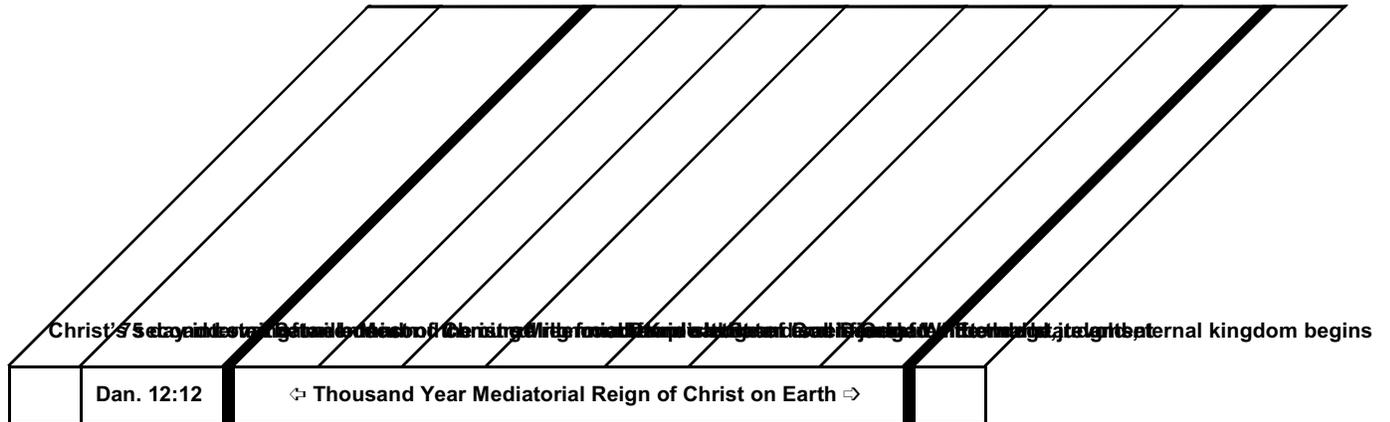
they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. 25 “The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent’s food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain,” says the Lord.

- I. **Jer. 23:5-8** “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. 6 “In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, ‘The Lord our righteousness.’ 7 “Therefore behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when they will no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,’ 8 but, ‘As the Lord lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel from the north land and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ Then they will live on their own soil.”
- J. **Ezek. 37:23-28** “They will no longer defile themselves with their idols, or with their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. And they will be My people, and I will be their God. 24 “My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them. 25 “They will live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers lived; and they will live on it, they, and their sons and their sons’ sons, forever; and David My servant will be their prince forever. 26 “I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. 27 “My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 28 “And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.” ’ ’ ”
- K. **Dan. 2:31-45** “You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 “The head of that statue was made of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 “You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them. 35 “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. 36 “This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. 37 “You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given them into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold. 39 “After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. 40 “Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. 41 “In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 “As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. 43 “And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. 44 “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. 45 “Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy.”
- L. **Micah 4:1-4** And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. 2 Many nations will come and say, “Come and let us go up to the mountain of the

Lord And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war. 4 Each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

- M. **Zech. 8:1-8** Then the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, 2 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘I am exceedingly jealous for Zion, yes, with great wrath I am jealous for her.’ 3 “Thus says the Lord, ‘I will return to Zion and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.’ 4 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each man with his staff in his hand because of age. 5 ‘And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.’ 6 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?’ declares the Lord of hosts. 7 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Behold, I am going to save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; 8 and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’
- N. **Zech. 14:6-11** In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to the Lord, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. 8 And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. 9 And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one. 10 All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin’s Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king’s wine presses. 11 People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.
- O. **Lk. 1:30-33** The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”
- P. **Rev. 5:10** “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”
- Q. **Rev. 12:5** And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.
- R. **Rev. 20:1-6** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 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.

### III. KEY EVENTS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE MILLENNIUM



The duration of the tribulation period is described in various ways. It is described as “Daniel’s seventieth week” or a week of years (Dan. 9:27). It is describe as “a time, times, and a half of time” (Dan. 7:2 & 12:7). It is described as “forty-two months” (Rev. 11:2 & 13:5). It is described as “one thousand, two hundred, and sixty days” (Rev. 11:3 & 12:6). Yet in one text there is an interesting statement and that text is Dan. 12:11-12 which reads, “11 From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.12 “How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!” Here we are presented with two atypical durations that don’t fit into the regular three and a half year period. The first atypical number is 1,290 days. This is 30 days or one month more than 3 ½ years. The second atypical number is 1,335 days, which is 75 days more than 3 ½ years. Students of the Bible have tried to discover why these two numbers are different. While there are many views, all of them are guesses since the Bible doesn’t explain the reason for these two references but here is one plausible explanation.

The 1,260 days, which includes thirty days more than 3½ years, might be a reference to 30 days of judgment that follow the second coming where the unbelievers of the earth “goats” are judged. Then the 1,335 days might include 45 more days after unbelievers are judged where Israel is organized, government is organized, and then the Millennial reign of Christ officially ensues 75 days after the end of the tribulation, forty-five days after unbelievers are judged.

#### Daniel’s Seventieth Week

Rev. 11:2; 13:5 – 42 months	Dan. 12:11 – 1,290 days	
First 3 ½ years of the tribulation	Second 3 ½ years of the tribulation	⇔75 days ⇔
Rev. 12:6; 11:3 – 1,260 days	Dan. 12:12 – 1,335 days	

#### IV. WHY THERE MUST BE A MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

- A. God promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all Israel that the land of Israel was to be given to them as an everlasting possession. This has not yet happened.
- B. God promised to David that the Messiah would sit on his throne and reign forever and ever. This has not yet happened.
- C. Many prophecies speak of the Lord ruling and reigning from Jerusalem. This has not yet happened.
- D. Christ has not yet proven to men, angels and demons that He is in fact the King of kings and Lord of Lords.
- E. Prophecies predict that the Messiah will have all the governments of the earth resting on His shoulders. This has not yet happened.
- F. Satan has not yet been bound.
- G. The curse has not yet been lifted.
- H. Perfect righteousness has not been experienced on earth yet.
- I. One of the hotly debated texts concerning the millennium is Rev. 20:1-6 which mentions six times that the duration of Jesus' earthly reign will last one thousand years. Yet many cannot hold to their theological system and except the clear literal meaning of the text and argue that the six fold mention of "one thousand" is figurative and not literal. Why do we insist that the thousand years is literal? Some of the reasons are listed below.
  - 1. There is a repetition of "thousand years." Not simply once, but six different times a specific numeric quantity which is unprecedented in prophetic Scripture. Symbolic numbering is never repeated like this anywhere in the Bible. There would be no reason for John to repeatedly refer to the time span of the millennium as being one thousand years if he meant to refer to an unspecific length of time.
  - 2. When you look at the six occurrences of 1000, there are three occurrences without the article "the" as in "a thousand years" and three with the article as in "the thousand years." When a word is used without the article it emphasizes the essence or nature of something. This tells us that John is saying that what is meant by "a thousand years" is that the time period has the same essence and nature as "a thousand years." When the article is used "the thousand years" it refers to something specific, definite and in this case it is 1000 years. Combined, these argue for a literal, time period of one thousand years.

3. The detail in the passage argues for a straight forward literal interpretation of 1000. The whole context is laden with enormous detail. There is detail about Satan's identity, about Satan being bound, and about the tribulation martyrs. It would seem inconsistent for John to give so much specific detail and yet have the term "thousand years" be unspecific.
4. John uses non-specific phrases in the context to describe non specific things. If he meant for "a thousand years" to mean "an indefinite period of time," why not use "a long time," since he used "a short time" in verse 3, "the number of them is like the sand of the seashore," verse 8, "a great multitude, which no one could count," Rev. 7:9, "day and night forever and ever," verse 10? It is hermeneutically inconsistent to take "thousand years" as anything but a literal thousand years.
5. The use of numbers throughout the book of Revelation argues for a literal use of numbers. Throughout the book of Revelation, when a specific number is used, a specific number is always intended! Numbers are never used in prophecy randomly or figuratively (as in poetry). We may not understand what the 10 toes, or 10 horns, or 4 beasts, or 7 churches, or 7 bowls, or 7 trumpets, or 7 seals are, but ten means ten, four means four, and seven means seven! All the numbers in Revelation can be understood literally because that's what the plain meaning of the context demands. What could be more literal than 12,000 x 12 = 144,000 (Rev.7), or 1260 days (Rev.11)? Why should 1000 mean something other than 1000?
6. If God simply meant for "thousand years" in Rev. 20:1-6 to indicate a long period of time, why not use an even larger number? John has already used "myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands" in Rev. 5:11; 200 million in Rev. 9:16; or 144,000 in Rev. 7:4. It's not as though "thousand" was the highest number John could use. So it is very unlikely that John wanted 1000 to represent "everlasting" or "forever and ever."

## V. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE MILLENNIUM

- A. You can praise God knowing that justice and righteousness will finally be established when Christ rules the earth as King in Jerusalem.
- B. You can rejoice knowing that you will rule and reign with Christ.
- C. The parables teach us that our faithfulness in this life will determine our place and service to God in his kingdom. This should motivate us to live for Christ and to be faithful in everything we do.
- D. Knowing the blessings to believers in the kingdom to come and the judgment that awaits those who do not believe, we should diligently share the gospel.