Doctrine of the Binding of Satan

Revelation 20:1-6

The Millennial of Revelation 20

1. A belief in a millennial reign of Christ is rooted in Revelation 20:1-10.

   - Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

2. This is the only New Testament passage that refers to a millennial reign. But what does it mean?

3. In considering this passage, whatever it might teach it does not describe the dispensational concept of the millennial for nothing is said about national Israel, the throne of David, the exaltation of the Jews, Jerusalem, or the Temple.

4. In considering this passage a harmony must be found between it and other end time chronology verses that are clearer. For example Jesus taught in John 5:28-29 a general resurrection. Christ said, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” The more obscure texts must be interpreted in light of clearer texts.

5. The clearest texts reveal some grand concepts that must not be pressed for details if none are given.
• The apostle Paul teaches that the end of time follows the resurrection of Christians at the Lord’s Second coming.

  1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Special Note.

The Second Coming of Christ is not in phases or stages. Jesus Christ will return in the same manner in which He went away. Acts 1:11 [The angels stood by] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

• Jesus taught that this resurrection will occur on the “last day”.

  John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

• Jesus also taught that the resurrection of His people will occur at the same time with the resurrection of the wicked. Paul and Daniel taught the same. On this point there is a divine consistency throughout Scripture.

  John 5:28-29 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

  2 Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

  Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
An “hour” is coming, a specific point in time, when “all” will come forth from the sphere of the dead. The resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked will not be separated by a thousand years or even by one week. Both occur on the Last Day.

- The general resurrection marks the defeat and destruction of the Last Enemy, which is Death.

  - 1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

  - 1 Corinthians 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

- John teaches that the destruction of the Last Enemy (Death) takes place at the Great White Throne judgment.

  - Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

- The Second Coming of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment cannot logically be separated by an expanse of time of 1,000 years for both occur on the Last Day, the day of the general resurrection, the day when death is destroyed.

- On the Last Day, not only will there be a general resurrection of all who are in the grave, the Great White Throne judgment, and the abolishment of death, but there will be the turning over of the kingdom to the Father.

  - 1 Corinthians 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he [Christ] shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

   The Last Day is not the time when Christ receives the kingdom. It is when He hands the kingdom over to the Father. Therefore, the messianic kingdom must be prior to the Last Day, when the Lord Jesus comes again the second time for all who believe (Heb. 9:28).

6. The Dispensational expectations of a Jewish millennial age which separates the Second Coming of Christ and the Great White Throne judgment cannot find support in the New Testament picture of the last days.
7. If Revelation 20:1-10 does not teach a thousand year period between the Second Coming and the Final Judgment, what period of time does it describe?

8. The answer seems plain. Revelation 20:1-10 describes the reign of Christ but this reign is not in the future, it is a present reality.

9. Following His resurrection all power was given unto Christ. Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

10. At His ascension Christ was given His kingdom in a more visible way.

- Acts 2:32-33 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

- Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

11. Revelation 20 speaks of the present reign of Christ in three scenes.

- The binding of Satan in verses 1-3
- The reign of the saints with Christ in verses 4-6
- The rebellion of the wicked in verses 7-10

12. The concept of Satan being bound in some definite way is taught in Scripture.

- Matthew 12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house. Christ states that He Himself has bound Satan so that He can plunder Satan’s house.

- Luke 10:18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. When His disciples returned with their report about casting out demons Christ exclaimed, “I know. I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightening.”

- John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. Jesus said that “now” in His day Satan would be cast out. He did not say that Satan would be cast out thousands of years in the future.

- 2 Thessalonians 2:6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. Led by God the Holy Spirit, Paul declared that the works of Satan were and are currently being restrained.
- Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; The death of deaths in the death of Christ has rendered Satan defeated, “destroyed”, powerless.

- Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Because Christ has bound Satan in order to plunder his house of precious souls held captive, because Christ watched Satan fall from heaven, because Christ in His own day cast out Satan, because the works of the Devil are being restrained, the evil one is not able to deceive the nations any longer. Now the Great Commission can be engaged in with confidence. And the gospel is being preached to all the nations for they are deceived no more.

- When Christ returns the current limitation of Satan’s power, accomplished by the Lord’s death, will render this Arch Enemy of men’s souls complete. Satan will be cast into the lake of fire forever.

13. As the scene of the binding of Satan brings great hope to the heart of the Christian so does the scene of the present reign of the saints in Revelation 20:4-6.

- The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is now reigning as King of kings and Lord of Lords.
  - Acts 17:7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.
  - Revelation 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

- Christians are in the kingdom of the King now.
  - Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.
  - Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

- Christ must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.
  - 1 Corinthians 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

- The present reign of Christ is occurring now because the last enemy to be destroyed is death and this will happen at the Lord’s second coming.
1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

- Christians also reign with the Lord in this present age.

Revelation 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Romans 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Ephesians 2:6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

- Those who reign with Christ are said to have a part in the first resurrection. But what is this first resurrection? To answer that question we must first ask, “What is the first death?” The answer: spiritual death.

- Throughout Scripture the first death is spiritual death.

Genesis 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die [lit. dying thou shalt die].

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

- The first resurrection must be a spiritual resurrection or regeneration, the giving of new life to spiritually dead sinners.
Regeneration is often spoken of in terms of resurrection.

- **John 5:24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

- **Ephesians 2:5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

- **Colossians 2:12** Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

- **1 John 3:14** We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Regeneration occurs when the believer is united to Christ and made a partaker of His resurrection.

- **John 5:24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

- **Romans 6:5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

- **Colossians 3:1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

The first resurrection of Revelation 20 must refer to the believers union with Christ and identification in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is a spiritual resurrection associated with the salvation of the soul. John says that he saw “the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

The concept of a present spiritual resurrection and a present reign with Christ would be a message of hope and comfort to those who were part of great tribulation.

In his gospel John writes of two resurrections. There is a spiritual resurrection involving the soul, which is regenerated, and reigning with Christ and there is also a physical resurrection.
Spiritual resurrection. John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Physical resurrection. John 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

14. In Revelation 20 the same author speaks of the first resurrections in the same sense. The first resurrection is spiritual life, regeneration. Only believers have a part in the first resurrection.

15. The second resurrection which is physical occurs at the second coming.

1 Corinthians 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

16. The third great scene of Revelation 20 is the rebellion of the wicked. Though the binding of Satan is a present reality, though the rule and reign of Christ and the saints is a present reality, a final full-scale rebellion of the wicked against established divine authority is presented as taking place in the future.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

17. At the end of this present age, Satan will be granted temporary freedom to launch a final assault against the Lord and His anointed. However, the rebellion will not last because Satan and his subjects will be destroyed.

18. When Christ comes He will defeat His arch rival, Satan, and the last enemy, Death. There will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. Christ will deliver up His kingdom to the Father. All things will be subject to Christ, and Christ “will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:24-28).
Arguments of Concern

19. Those that do not see the present reign of Christ set forth specific objections.

- The language of Acts 1.

  - Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The classical dispensational understanding of this passage is that even after the resurrection the disciples were still thinking in terms of a literal, physical, earthly, Jewish messianic kingdom, and Jesus did not discourage that thinking.

Response. If the disciples were still thinking about the exaltation of a Jewish kingdom nation they did not retain that notion after the Day of Pentecost as indicated in the Acts of the Apostle and for two reasons. First, they remembered the words of the Lord during the totality of His ministry and during His post resurrection period that included instruction on the true nature of His kingdom. Secondly, the Holy Spirit gave them renewed understanding. Following the Day of Pentecost the apostles preached the kingdom as a present reality and not as a futuristic expectation. The message was very simple: the King has come; come to the kingdom.

- Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

- Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

- Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

- Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

- Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

- Acts 28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.
The apostles finally came to understand that the kingdom Christ came to establish, and did establish, is a present reality. The Messianic kingdom and the reign of Christ is recorded in Matthew 11:1-6.

Matthew 11:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come [i.e. the Messiah], or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

Only the Messiah could do what Jesus did. Only as the Messianic King with power over His kingdom could Jesus challenge the kingdoms of this world. In the establishment of His kingdom Jesus did not fail.

The language of Revelation 20:5. John plainly states that the saints “shall reign with him a thousand years.” The question is asked how the present age can be the millennium of Revelation 20 if this present reign has lasted now over 2,000 years.

Response. It is true that the Dispensationalist does not view the thousand years of Revelation 20 as a term of completion or perfection. It is insisted that there be only a literal thousand year reign of Christ. The problem with taking the thousand years literally becomes apparent when the number “one thousand” is used elsewhere in Scripture. For example, Deuteronomy 7:9 teaches that God keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him and obey His commandments for a thousand generations. Abraham lived about four thousand years ago. God has promised to keep His covenant with Abraham for a thousand generations. If a generation is about 40 years then God must keep His covenant with Abraham for another 36,000 years. While amillennialist would have no problem with that, few if any Dispensationalist believe there will be another 36,000 years of human history. The whole Dispensational scheme is built upon the imminent return of Christ.

Psalm 50:10 teaches that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Does this mean that the cattle on hill 1001 belongs to someone else? Of course not. The larger point is that the number “one thousand” does not have to, and often cannot be interpreted literally. The context determines the meaning of the thought. In context, Revelation is a symbolic book full of spiritual truth. The rest of the Bible indicates that the period described in these verses is the present age including the final rebellion. There is no wicked revolt in the future after Christ returns. How can there be if all are resurrected, Satan is cast into hell along with death, and the Father has received the kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:24)?
There is something else to remember about Revelation 19 and 20. The text only records the order the vision was seen, not the order the events occur. The book of the Revelation is not set forth in a linear manner but is cyclical. For example, Revelation 11:17-18 also speaks of the reign of Christ and a final judgment, but then Revelation 12:1-6 speaks of the Lord’s birth and ascension. The order of events is reversed.

- The chronology of Revelation 19 and 20. The question might be asked how Revelation 20 can describe the present age before Christ’s return when it follows chapter 19 which seems to picture the second coming of the Lord.

Response. Actually, this is a good point. The answer is this. Revelation 19:17-20 is a scene that is not related to the second coming of Christ and for this reason. When Christ returns there will be no resistance for men will be terrified at the wrath of God. The mind set of men before God is revealed in Revelation 6.

Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

Dispensationalists enjoy portraying man in league with Satan making war on the Lord. It is true that in vain imagination men gather to make war but once the wrath of God is revealed men’s hearts melt causing individuals to act like a frightened child in a thunderstorm while the evil one is captured along with his false prophet (Rev. 19:19-21).

20. It is instructive to remember with what Dispensationalism pre-millennialism has been charged.

- The System does not recognize that Christ has received His kingdom and is now reigning from the right hand of God (Acts 2; Daniel 7:13-14; Acts 17:7; Colossians 1:13; Rev. 1:5).

- The System does not recognize that the church is reigning now with Christ, both in heaven (Ephesians 2:6) and on earth (Romans 5:17; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6).

- The System does not recognize that Christ will continue to reign until He has put all of His enemies under His feet (Psalm 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25).

- The System does not concede that the last enemy to be destroyed is death and that this destruction will occur on the Last Day, when Christ comes the second time for all who believe (Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28; John 6:40; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26; 54-55).

- The System does not acknowledge that the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:11-14 is also the day on which death is destroyed. Therefore, those two events cannot be separated by a thousand years.
21. What is contended for is the following:

- Jesus Christ is presently King of kings and Lord of lords today;
- Jesus Christ is the Ruler of the kings of the earth at this very hour (Revelation 1:5);
- the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Revelation 11:15; Daniel 7:13-14);
- Christ shall continue His present rule until all of His enemies are under His feet;
- when all is accomplished Christ will return once and for all. He will call all men out of the grave, He will judge every individual in righteousness, and He will deliver the kingdom to the Father. Death and hell and the devil shall be cast into the Lake of Fire;
- and there will be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.