

# 20th Century Bible Course

Dear Student:

Have you ever heard anyone mention something about a thousand years of peace? Perhaps as you turned your radio dials in search of something interesting to listen to, you caught fragments from a radio preacher about a thousand years when Christ would reign on earth. Periodically through the years this concept has taken root in man's thinking. Believe it or not, World War I was the "War to End Wars!" Its termination was to usher in that golden age of peace. Obviously, something went wrong somewhere!

Or perhaps as you flipped through the evening newspaper, an announcement of a lecture caught your eye: "The Coming Millennium-Where Will You Be?" Or you may have even heard someone claim that we are now in the millennium-that right now the old devil is bound. Well, if that is so, he must be tied with a rubber chain that stretches from Paris to Bombay, and from Washington to Moscow, for we need only look at what is happening about us to know that the devil has never been more active!

It is not surprising that many people are vague and confused on this subject, for many ideas about what is to occur during the millennium and when it is to take place, have been floating around. However, we do not need to be uncertain about it, for once again, the Bible comes up with the answers. In its pages are clearly outlined not only what is going to happen during the millennium, but also what will take place at its beginning and at its close, and even the purpose God has for planning one.

Isn't it comforting to know that God has a master plan for this planet and its wayward inhabitants, and as time unfolds, everything happens right on time! Paul said, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son ... to redeem" the world (Galatians 4:4, 5). Christ's coming as a Babe in Bethlehem took place *exactly* when heaven had planned it. And so did His death. At the very moment the Passover lamb was being slain in the temple courts, the real Lamb of God expired on Calvary's cruel cross. He Himself had said just a few hours previously, "The hour is come" (Mark 14:4).

Thus we may be certain that the closing events of God's marvelous plan of restoration, which includes His second coming and the millennium, will likewise take place exactly when they are scheduled.

The clock of time ticks on. Every day, every year brings us closer to those final scenes. How important it is to know what to expect and how to be prepared.

With a prayer that God will guide you as you study, Your Bible Instructor

## 20TH CENTURY BIBLE COURSE

### LESSON 6

#### THE MILLENNIUM

#### SCRIPTURE READING: REVELATION 20 (NT 224 [177])

Nothing takes God by surprise. When sin, uninvited, stepped into our universe, God was not unprepared. Immediately "Operation Redemption" went into effect. This plan, formulated before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19, 20, included some aspects which you have already studied, and some to be covered today and in future lessons. In the Bible God unfolds this plan to mankind. In fact, have you ever noticed that the very first chapters of Genesis describe this planet and its first caretakers-Adam and Eve-before the first jarring note of sin was heard, while the last chapters picture in glowing language the "new heaven and new earth" which there will be after the detour with sin is finally ended? Is this a coincidence, or could God be trying to say to us, "Look, this is how it was back there in Eden-

nothing but happiness and joy. And although it looks like the enemy has ruined everything, when the sin problem is completely settled, I assure you that my original purposes will be fully carried out." Can you catch the longing of His heart as it breaks through to us in overtones of tenderness in His last great invitation? "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come" (Revelation 22:17). "I want you there," He pleads. "I can't bear that any of my children be missing." And to show us *how* to accept this invitation, *how* to respond to His terms of mercy, He has provided us with full instructions in His Word. What more could a loving God do?

Some of the highlights of God's plan for redeeming man are as follows:

1. The promise to Adam and Eve that a way of escape had been made for them
2. Further details to Noah, Abraham, Moses, and succeeding prophets
3. Sacrificial services given to Israel to help them keep fresh the promise of a Saviour
4. The arrival of the Messiah
5. The obedience and sinless life of the Messiah
6. The death and resurrection of the Messiah
7. The intercession of Christ in heaven following His ascension
8. The judgment
9. The second coming (to take the redeemed to heaven)
10. The millennium
11. The end of sin and sinners; a new heaven and earth (completing the restoration) Each phase accomplishes a definite purpose in God's total redemption package, and, as you can see, the center and chief figure throughout is Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour. He who has dedicated His all to redeem mankind will also surely bring it to a victorious finish. He is the "author and *finisher* of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). Every person on this earth should know what this plan is, since his eternal welfare depends on his personal response to it.

Our lesson today deals with the thousand-year period commonly known as the millennium (a word coined from two Latin words, *mille* and *annus*, meaning a thousand years). Before proceeding, be sure to read the entire chapter of Revelation 20.

## Part 1- EVENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM

1. **In what two resurrections did Christ say the dead will be raised? John 5:28, 29** "They that have done good, unto the \_\_\_\_\_." "They that have done evil, unto the \_\_\_\_\_."
2. **When will the righteous dead be raised? 1 Thessalonians 4:16** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **What does the Bible call the resurrection of the righteous? Revelation 20:6** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **What happens to the living righteous when Christ comes? 1 Thessalonians 4:1** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **What happens to the wicked who are living when Christ comes? 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:8** They "shall be punished with \_\_\_\_\_ from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." "The Lord shall consume [them] with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy [them] with the \_\_\_\_\_."
6. **When will the wicked people be resurrected? Revelation 20:5**  
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We noticed that the millennium is bound by two resurrections-that of the righteous at the beginning, and that of the wicked at the end. We also learned that the resurrection of the righteous takes place at the second coming of Christ. Therefore, it follows that the millennium will begin at Christ's second coming and consists of the thousand years immediately following it.

## Part 2-- DURING THE MILLENNIUM

**1. What will the righteous people be doing in heaven during the millennium? Revelation 20:4,6; 1 Corinthians 6:1-3; Jude 6**

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The judgment that began in heaven before Christ returned (Revelation 22:12; Matthew 16:27) determined who was to receive the reward of eternal life. Another stage of God's dealing with the sin problem now begins. Suppose you had a very dear friend on earth, but did not see him in heaven. During the millennium you will be able to see just how God handled his case and the cases of all others. God allows a thousand years for this work. He will run no risk of having a single doubt in anyone's mind about His work for fallen man, and so He even permits the saved to participate in the judgment of those who are not saved. Every question will be answered; no one will ever have reason to doubt God's justice and mercy.

You see, Satan questioned God's fairness, and then he led Adam and Eve to doubt also. Only as the universe realizes the enormous cost of rebellion and the injustice of Satan's charges, can God assure complete harmony in His universe. That is why He gives His people the right to an open review of everything.

**2. If all the righteous are in heaven and all the wicked are dead, how many people will be on the earth during the millennium? Jeremiah 4:23-27**

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All is darkness, no man is left alive upon the earth. Even the birds are gone! The cities are broken down; the unburied dead are strewn about (Jeremiah 25:33). This desolation is brought on by a series of mind-boggling events: (1) the terrible plagues (Revelation 15, 16), including the general carnage and devastation of Armageddon; and (2) the awesome coming of Christ in glory, at which time the wicked living are destroyed and the earth is broken up by a great earthquake.

**3. Because Satan is bound, what is he unable to do during the millennium? Revelation 20:3** "That he should \_\_\_\_\_ no more."

**Thought question: Do you think the chain with which Satan is bound is literal or figurative? (For a clue see Jude 6, and 2 Peter 2:4)**  
**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_

The expression "bottomless pit" means a place of chaos, darkness, or desolation, and is translated from the Greek word from which we get "abyss." The same Greek word is used in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament in both Genesis 1:2 and in Jeremiah 4:23-25, where the earth is pictured as being "without form, and void."

Apparently Satan will have nothing to do for a thousand years but to wander to and fro on this desolate earth. For six thousand years he has followed folk around trying to enlist them on his side. Now he is left with only his own thoughts. Surely that will be a miserable time for Satan-forced to live with himself for a thousand years-just thinking, thinking, thinking-nothing to do but wander around contemplating the part which he has acted since first he rebelled against heaven's government, and looking forward with trembling and terror to the dreadful future when he must suffer for all the evil that he has done. He is well aware that the Word of God is sure, and that there still remains one short chapter in his controversy with God (Revelation 20:3) ends with the short but doom-packed phrase: "And after that he must be loosed a little season"; and Jeremiah 4:25 confirms this: "Yet will I not make a full end.")

**Part 3-- EVENTS AT THE END OF THE MILLENNIUM**

**1. When will the wicked dead be resurrected? (See question 6.)** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. When will Satan be loosed out of his prison? Revelation 20:7** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How does the city of God get to this earth? Revelation 21:2, 3** \_\_\_\_\_

With the resurrection of the wicked, Satan is "loosed." Once again he has someone to deceive. In the meantime the Holy City descends from heaven. What a spectacular sight- a city the size of Oregon slowly coming down through the vaults of heaven (Revelation 21:16). One of the Old Testament prophets was

given a glimpse of this fantastic event (Zechariah 14:3-5, 10. Apparently Jesus Himself precedes the city, and as His feet touch the Mount of Olives-the very spot from which He ascended 20 centuries before-the mountain splits down the middle, spreading out into one vast plain to form a special landing strip for the Holy City. When Jesus comes the second time. He comes *for* the saints, and meets them "in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). This time, however, Zechariah declares that all the saints will be *with* Him-their spaceship, doubtless being the New Jerusalem itself. Is it any wonder that after John had seen all this in vision that God took special pains to reassure him that he was not hallucinating, that every word was "true and faithful" (Revelation 21:5)?

**4. How does Satan show that he has not changed during the millennium? Revelation 20:8, 9**

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**5. What is the outcome of the desperate attempt of Satan and his followers to take the City of God? (verses 9,14, 15)**

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This is the last act in the great struggle between Christ and Satan. Here before the Holy City the whole human race is gathered together for the last and only time-the righteous sheltered within those beautiful jasper walls; the wicked, countless "as the sand of the sea," spread out in battle formation as far as the eye can see, around its glorious heights. Here the eternal separation of the righteous from the wicked takes place, for when God rains down fire from heaven, all who have rebelled against His ways, including Satan and the evil angels, experience what the Bible calls the "second death."

**Thought question: Why do you suppose this is called the "second" death, and how does it differ from the "first" death? (Compare Hebrews 9:27)**

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**6. What effect does this fire have upon the earth? 2 Peter 3:10**

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Human language is inadequate to describe the things which God has prepared for them that love him (1 Corinthians 2:9). It will have to be experienced to be appreciated.

**7. Who is to have the privilege of inhabiting this new earth? Revelation 21:27**

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One day soon, when Christ returns for His people, the space trip of all ages will become a reality. Gravity will be powerless when the Son of God lifts His people into the skies. Moving effortlessly through the atmosphere, into the nothingness of space, on across the vast void, they finally arrive at their destination-The City of God itself. Today you have learned that this will actually be a "round trip," for eventually God will move His capitol city down to the earth where He Himself shall be with His people (Revelation 21:3). Then will come true Christ's promise that the "meek shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

Jesus has already reserved a place for you on this trip (1 Peter 1:4; John 14:1-3). He wouldn't have done this if He had not wanted you to be there. How would Jesus feel if He should check the list and find your name missing? How would He feel if He thought you didn't want the life that cost Him so much? There is only one place where you can accept that reservation. It is a place called Calvary. Wealth or fame or position cannot buy you an entrance to that city. No merit of your own can earn it. But Jesus has left you a paid ticket at the foot of the cross. And He's waiting for you to pick it up.

I wonder if you recall the day when twenty thousand Frenchmen approached the Arc de Triomphe as the armistice of World War I was celebrated. A great choir, from a platform erected above the archway, sang out the challenge, "By what right do you come to the arch of victory?" And from the lips of twenty thousand Frenchmen came the chorus, "We come by the blood-red banner of Verdun!"

It will be like that when the Lord of heaven sweeps through the gates of the city with His people. The majestic angelic choir queries, "By what right do you enter here?" And the answer returns in bold refrain, "We come by the blood-red banner of Calvary!" There is no other way to come. No other door. No other gate. Every person who enters those pearly gates and every resident of that new and gloriously beautiful earth, will come by the way of the cross. Will you lift its banner now-by an act of deliberate choice? There is no compulsion. Just an appeal. But it means life-eternal life-satisfying life-life it would be a tragedy to miss-life that cost the Son of God His own lifeblood. Will you accept it?

The next two lessons will go into greater detail on how we may be certain to be among those who are inside the city at the close of this thousand-year period, rather than in the vast crowd surrounding it.