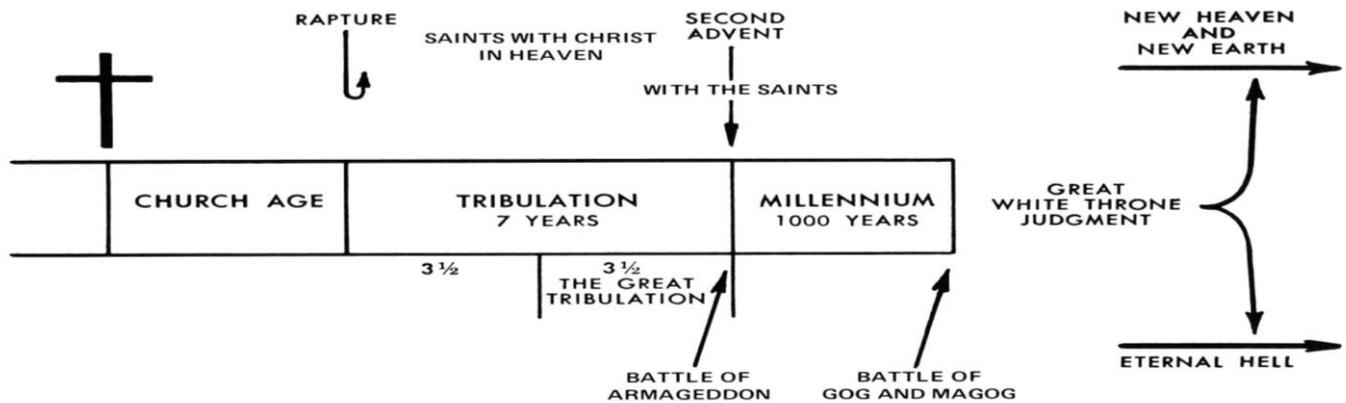


# The Millennium



The Millennium is a period of 1,000 years when Christ the King will reign over the whole earth. Christ as King describes His relationship to Israel, **not** the Church (Matthew 27.42, Mark 15.32, John 1.49, 12.13). In His relationship to the Church, He is the Head of the body (Colossians 1.18) and the Bridegroom to the bride (Revelation 21.9). The OT speaks of Israel being the wife of Jehovah. The NT speaks of the Church being the wife of the Lamb (Ephesians 5.22-33, Revelation 21.9). Thus, any marriage ceremony spoken of in Scripture (involving God) must either concern Christ and the Church (Revelation 19), **or** Jehovah and Israel (Jeremiah 3, 31.31-32, Isaiah 50.1, 54.5, Ezekiel 16.8, Hosea 1-2).

## The Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19.1-10)

The Church is God's heavenly people and could be removed to heaven at any time (1 Thessalonians 4), following which the Judgment Seat of Christ will take place. This does not concern judgment for sins, but rather involves a life review and reward for all Christians (Romans 14.10, 1 Corinthians 3, 4.5, 2 Corinthians 5.10). The marriage **ceremony** of the Lamb then takes place in heaven towards the end of the seven year tribulation on Earth (Revelation 19.7-9).

The Church, the Lamb's wife is described as 'having made herself ready' and being 'arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints' (JND). The robes she wears are the result of the righteous acts of the saints which have been Divinely evaluated and survived the fire of the Judgment Seat. The acts of gold, silver and precious stones remain.

Whilst the marriage ceremony takes place in the Father's house in heaven, the marriage supper takes place on earth. This is not surprising as the social background of marriage in NT times indicates that the marriage ceremony and marriage supper were different events, at different times in different places:

**The Ceremony.** *The bridegroom accompanied with his friends, went to the home of the bride and escorted her back to his home, where the wedding ceremony took place. This corresponds to the moment of the rapture when Christ comes to call away His bride and take her to the Father's house for the wedding ceremony. It is clear that the coming of Christ for the church is very much His personal act, as it is the Lord 'himself' (1 Thessalonians 4.16) who summons her, so that the friends of the bridegroom (John 3.29) must wait in heaven for the return of Christ and His bride. **The Supper.** The wedding ceremony over, the bridegroom introduced the bride to her home which they were to share together and it is there that the marriage feast took place. This is variously called the 'marriage feast' and the 'marriage supper' and was not merely one meal, but a series of festivities that could go on for several days. It is this third stage of the marriage that is referred to in the story of the marriage in Cana of Galilee (John 2.1-11) and it is also the background of the picture in Matthew 25.1-10.*

Invited guests are present at the marriage supper: 'Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb' (Revelation 19.9). The phrase 'blessed' is only ever used in the book of Revelation of God bestowing blessings on particular groups of people on **earth** (cf. Revelation 1.3, 14.13, 16.15, 20.6, 22.7, 14). The 'call' of the gospel goes out during the tribulation and souls who respond are welcomed to these festal gatherings (cf. Matthew 22.3, Luke 14.17). There will be other gathered guests too, including those John the Baptist calls 'friends of the bridegroom' (John 3.29). The first resurrection will also have been completed at this time (Revelation 20.4-6), so the saints of all ages will be present and share in the joy of Christ and His bride at the marriage supper.

### The Second Advent (Revelation 19.11-21)

Before the marriage supper of the Lamb takes place on earth, Christ shall return in great power and glory as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19.16). This mighty event is the fulfilment of much prophecy (e.g. Zechariah 14.3-4, Matthew 24.29-30, 2 Thessalonians 1.7-8) and takes place as the 'kings of the earth' have gathered themselves and their armies in a 200 mile battle line around and against Jerusalem (Psalm 2.1-3, Zechariah 14.2, Revelation 14.20). At this point, heaven is opened and remains 'standing open' (Revelation 19.11) as Christ is revealed in all His great glory to 'every eye' (Matthew 24.27-31, Revelation 1.7). He comes from heaven with 'the armies which were in heaven' following Him (Revelation 19.14). They comprise, not just the Church, but the saved ones of all ages sharing in the victory and glory of Christ's coming (Zechariah 14.5, 1 Thessalonians 3.13, Jude 14). *Note. The white robes do not necessarily demand resurrection (cf. Revelation 6.11).*

The Lord Jesus comes with a sword (warrior) as He acts and conquers by His word (Isaiah 11.4, 2 Thessalonians 2.8). He will use the rod (shepherd) as ruling as a shepherd involves ruthless destruction of the sheep's enemies (Psalm 2.8-9). He shall tread the human winepress (farmer), crushing the rebellion and wickedness of all gathered against Him (Isaiah 63.3, Joel 3.13-14). This is the time of the battle of Armageddon (cf. Revelation 16.16), although it is not really a battle, rather the complete destruction of all the gathered armies and enemies of Christ. This is graphically pictured in the summoning of the birds of the air to feast upon the dead bodies that remain (Revelation 19.17-18).

Before Christ slays the enemies (Revelation 19.21), the Satanic ring leaders, the Beast and False Prophet are removed from earth and 'cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone' (Revelation 19.20). The Beast, or beast 'out of the sea' (Revelation 13.1) is a Gentile political world leader. He ascends from the 'abyss' (his satanically staged resurrection) at the midpoint of the tribulation (Revelation 11.7, 17.8) and embodies the power of Satan (Revelation 13.1-10). He is **anti-God** (cf. Revelation 13.6) and claims the worship that belongs to God alone (2 Thessalonians 2.4). The False Prophet is the beast 'out of the earth' (Revelation 13.11). He is a Jew who directs the worship of all people to the Beast and has the ability to do 'great wonders' (Revelation 13.12-13). He is **anti-Christ** (cf. 1 John 2.18) in the sense that he acts as a 'replacement' for the genuine Lord Jesus Christ that Israel rejected and refused at His first advent.

### The Establishment of the Kingdom (Revelation 20.1-6)

The millennial kingdom is established by the personal return of the Lord Jesus to the earth (Revelation 19.20). This is a literal kingdom which will last for 1,000 years in which the Lord Jesus will reign with His saints. The kingdom will centre on Israel (Deuteronomy 28.13), with Jerusalem as the capital, but will also embrace the whole earth (Zechariah 9.10). All who enter this kingdom to dwell on earth will be redeemed and are the 'sheep' of Matthew 25.33. The earth will be completely different **geographically** (Zechariah 14.4, Isaiah 11.15-16), **naturally** (Isaiah 11.6-9, 35.1-2) and **nationally** (Isaiah 11.10-14). There will also be changes **physically**, human body (Isaiah 35.5-7).

Following the removal of the Beast and False Prophet to the Lake of Fire, Satan himself is 'bound' and placed in the 'bottomless pit', a dark dungeon where spirit beings are imprisoned (Revelation 9.1-2, 11). This will physically restrain Satan from his deceptive activities amongst men, however, he will be released at the end of the Millennium for 'a little season' in which he will lead a final, last rebellion against God (Revelation 20.7-10).

As Christ establishes His new government, John sees 'thrones' upon which saints of the church age will sit (Matthew 19.28). It is likely that **all** the resurrected saints of the **OT** and **church** age will share in the administration of the kingdom at various levels (cf. Daniel 7.22, 1 Corinthians 4.8). Those who returned with Christ (Revelation 19.14) have now exchanged the horses for thrones. Revelation 20.4 also indicates that the saints who were martyred during the tribulation will be raised at this point to reign with Christ. The phrase 'lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years' can read 'and they came to life', i.e. they received resurrection bodies which fitted them to reign with Him. All these reign with Christ, whilst the 'sheep' of Matthew 25 (Jews and Gentiles) and the 144,000, all of whom have come through the tribulation, become the citizens or subjects of the king.

The resurrection of the tribulation martyrs completes what is known as the '**first** resurrection' (Revelation 20.5), or 'resurrection of life' (John 5.29). This not only implies a **second** resurrection (which will follow at the end of the Millennium) but also a **different kind** of resurrection. The first and pattern resurrection of this order is the resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15.20). This is followed by the resurrection of the church age saints (1 Thessalonians 4.16), the OT saints and the martyred dead of the tribulation period. The **first** resurrection is therefore complete at the commencement of the millennial reign. *Note. The OT saints are resurrected at the same time as the tribulation martyrs (Daniel 12.2, Isaiah 26.19). Daniel 12 sets this time to be following Israel's deliverance from the Beast at the Second Advent (Daniel 12.1). Isaiah 26.19-20 confirms the same by placing the time of Israel's resurrection at the point where 'the indignation be overpast', i.e. the end of the tribulation period.*