

## ~The Millennium~

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THIS PAPER IS DEDICATED to an overview of the epistle/prophecy known to us as Revelation. It's in no way an exhaustive commentary of that fascinating prophecy. As you may have gathered from the title, this paper will focus on the idea of "the millennium" or, more correctly, the "thousand years" mentioned in chapter 20. This will be covered in Section 2. Before we can deal with that passage, however, a study of other selected passages will be needed.

These will be addressed in Section 1. As always, the method of study will be the inductive study method, also known as indexing. So without further ado, let's begin our study.

### Section 1

The author of Revelation identifies himself simply as "John" in verse 4 of the first chapter. The fact that he doesn't identify himself further, shows us that this John was probably very well known to his first century readers. In all likelihood this was the apostle John, which most scholars will agree.

However, determining when Revelation was written has been a little bit more difficult. The reason for this is that there are differences of opinion as to when this book was written. These can be summed up as the "late date" and the "early date" theories. Those who hold to the "late date," have Revelation written during the time of *Domitian Caesar (AD 95-96)*. This date is determined by the following statement by *Irenaeus (AD 130 to AD 202)*, as quoted by *Eusebius, the church historian, in AD 325*:

In this persecution [of Christians under Domitian], it is handed down by tradition that the apostle and evangelist John, who was yet living, in consequence of his testimony to the divine word, was condemned to dwell on the island of Patmos. Irenaeus, indeed, in his fifth book against the heresies, speaks in the following way, *"If, however, it were necessary to proclaim [the name of the Anti-Christ] it would have been declared by him who saw the revelation, for it is not long since it was seen, but almost in our own generation, at the close of Domitian's reign."*

There are things about this statement that need to be noted. First, Irenaeus did not witness this. He referred to *Polycarp (who supposedly knew the apostle John)*. Secondly, the key part -- "it is not long since it was seen" -- is ambiguous. According to Irenaeus recollection, Polycarp saw "it" sometime in of AD 95-96, during the last part Domitian's reign. Thirdly, we do not know if the "it" Polycarp was referring to was John, the visions he saw, the name of anti-christ, or the book itself and we do not know if he meant that the book was written at that time or not. Furthermore, it comes to us through three people separated by three centuries. Simply put, this is hear-say.

*This statement, even with all of this uncertainty, is the only evidence used to support the "late date."* It has been accepted by generations of people without really questioning it or examining it in light of the book itself. The late date has been passed on to us in the same way it was passed on to Eusebius, *"...it [was] handed down by tradition..."* Tradition is not the way to interpret Scripture. So, where can we turn to find evidence for the dating of Revelation? Within the book itself. It will be shown from internal evidence that Revelation was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

## **The Tribes of the Earth**

John wrote that this was the "revelation (or revealing) of Jesus Christ" (verse 1) who was coming "with the clouds, and every eye will see Him and those who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth (or land) will wail due to Him. Yes, Amen" (verse 7) . This is the main purpose of Revelation. The revealing of Jesus to the "tribes of the earth (or land)." Now, we must identify, from Scripture, who those "tribes" were. To do that, we must keep in mind this simple rule of interpreting the Bible: let Scripture interpret Scripture. We can do that quite easily by looking at **Zechariah 12:10-14**.

And I will pour out on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and prayers. And they (i.e., the inhabitants of Jerusalem) shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him. As one mourns for an only son, and will be bitter over Him like the bitterness over the firstborn. In that day (i.e., when they look on Him whom they had pierced) the mourning in Jerusalem will be great, like the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, families by families alone; the family of the house of David alone, and their wives alone; the family of Nathan alone, and their wives alone; the family of the house of Levi alone, and their wives alone; the family of Shimei alone, and their wives alone; all the families who are left, family by family alone, and their wives alone.

Obviously, this is the foundation for John's "every eye will see Him and those who pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth (or land) will wail due to Him." The Hebrew word for "family" is mishpachah and it means "family; by extension a tribe or people." So, in essence, Zechariah was saying that the "tribes of the land" would mourn for Him whom they had pierced. Who were those "tribes?" "The inhabitants of Jerusalem." This also helps us identify the "earth" in Revelation 1:7. According to Zechariah, the "earth" is the land of Palestine, specifically, Jerusalem. Also, it is those tribes, i.e., the nation of Israel, who would "look on Me whom they had pierced." And because of that, "the mourning in Jerusalem" would be great. With all of this information, we can see that the "tribes of the earth" in Revelation 1:7 are the nation of Israel. The "earth" is Palestine. The land that would mourn is Jerusalem.

So, the main purpose of Revelation would be to reveal Jesus to the nation of Israel. The place of this revealing would be Jerusalem. Lastly, this revealing would be to those who pierced Him, i.e., the Jews. This is not a general reference to the Jewish nation as some commentators state, but to Christ's contemporary generation-that generation was destroyed in AD 70, by the Roman Legions. Therefore, the book of Revelation must have been written before that event.

## **The Seven Churches in Asia**

The next point to consider is that John wrote Revelation to a specific group of churches in Asia (verse 4). The importance of this statement cannot be overlooked (even though it has been by many scholars). There is only one small window of time in which there were only seven churches in Asia. The early AD 60's. The apostle Paul established nine churches in that area, but only seven were addressed in Revelation. The reason for this is that the cities of Colosse, Hierapolis, and Laodicea, were all destroyed by an earthquake around AD 61. Laodicea was rebuilt soon afterwards, but the other two cities were not. This left only seven churches in Asia during the five years just prior to the beginning of the Roman/Jewish war. Of particular importance is the message to the church of Philadelphia (3:7-13). In verses 10 and 11, Christ told John to inform them that an "hour of trial" or a "season of severe trial" was "about to come upon all the habitable world," i.e., the Roman Empire. Christ then told them that He was "coming quickly" and that they should hold fast. The reason this is important (besides the fact that this was directed to an actual church in the first century) is that the *first persecution of Christians took place under Nero Caesar in AD 64*. Therefore, Revelation must have been written before that time.

## 666

The following passage has been a problem for many people for many years. But, if we keep in mind what we have learned so far, then this passage becomes crystal clear. The section we need to focus on is verses 16-18 of chapter 13. There we find everyone whose names were not written in "the book of life of the Lamb" received a mark on their right hand, or on their foreheads, so that none could buy or sell, except the [one] having the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of its name. Here is wisdom: Let the one having reason count the number of the beast, for it is [the] number of a man. And it's number is six hundred and sixty-six.

This is not an isolated passage. The prophet Ezekiel recorded a very similar scene in Ezekiel 8 and 9. Through a series of scenes, God showed Ezekiel the abominations of the people of Israel, from the common man all the way up to the priests in the temple. Then God gave the order for a scribe to go throughout the city and "put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed" (9:4;). After the scribe returned, the "executioners of the city" went and slaughtered everyone -- "old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women" -- who did not have the mark. We understand from this passage that the mark was not a physical mark (for Ezekiel was having a vision). The "mark" symbolized the spiritual condition of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The ones with the "mark" were in allegiance with God. The reason this is so important is that Revelation 13:16-18 is based on Ezekiel 8 and 9. However, in Revelation, the mark is reversed. That is to say, the mark was on those who were against God and had allegiance to the "beast."

The New International Version translates verse 17 as, "no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name." This tells us that the mark of the beast was symbolic for the "name...or number of the beast." Then John wrote that the number "is the number of a man; and his number is 666." This tells us that those who received the "mark" were actually in allegiance with a "man," an actual person of the first century. So, who was he? NERO CAESAR.

John used a puzzle called gematria in which numbers are used to represent certain letters. John used the puzzle to reveal Nero without actually writing down his name. Remember, the early churches were being persecuted during this time--not only from the Jews, but also the Romans.

Nero Caesar fits the gematria code number "666." Using this code, his name would be rendered as "NRWN QSR." (NRWN QSR). The number values are: N = 50, R = 200, W = 6, N = 50, Q = 100, S = 60, R = 200; which when added together equals 666. The fact that Nero fits the description of the "beast" is well documented. He murdered his parents, wife, brother, aunt, and many others. He was a torturer, a homosexual rapist, and a sodomite. He even married two young boys and paraded them around as his wives. He was truly bestial in his character, depravity and actions. Nero is relevant to Revelation because he initiated the war against the Jews and was the first Emperor to persecute the Christians. Under his persecutions, Christians were crucified, beheaded, burnt alive and used as torches to light the palace gardens.

### **John must prophesy again**

Another point in favour of the early date is the fact that John was told that he "must again prophesy before peoples and nations and tongues and many kings" in chapter 10 and verse 11. Now, if Revelation was written in AD 95-96, John would have been over 90 years old and it would have been very difficult for him to travel to the various "nations and...many kings" and preach. However, with Revelation written earlier, John would have been in his mid 60's and at that age, his traveling would have been more feasible.

### **The Temple was still standing**

One of the most compelling proofs that Revelation was written before Jerusalem was destroyed is the fact that Herod's temple was still standing. In chapter 11, verse's 1 and 2, John wrote,

And a reed like a staff was given to me, and the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those worshipping in it. And cast aside the outside court of the temple and do not measure it, for it was given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city forty-two months."

How do we know that this was Herod's temple of the first century and not some future one? ***First, there is not one verse in the entire Bible that speaks of a physical "rebuilt" Jewish Temple.*** Not one. See how the Apostles interpret Amos which reads:

#### **Amos 9:11**

"In that day ***I will restore David's fallen tent.*** I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be..."

**James, in Acts 15, interprets Amos to show that Gentiles are welcome in the body of Christ (the tent of David). He does NOT interpret Amos as speaking of a future restoration of the Jews. See below in the context of Acts 15!**

#### **Acts 15:15-16**

"The words of the prophets (Amos 9:11) are in agreement with this, as it is written: **16** "After this ***I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent.*** Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it..."

**Luke 21:20-24.** And when you see Jerusalem encircled by armies, then know that the ruin of it has come. Then those in Jerusalem, let them flee into the mountains, and those in [the] midst of it, let them go out, and those in the open spaces, let them not enter into it. For these are [the] days of vengeance [when] all the things having been written are to be fulfilled. But woe to the pregnant women, and those giving suck in those days; for distress will be great on the earth, and wrath on this people. And they will fall by [the] mouth of [the] sword, and will be led captive to all the nations. And Jerusalem will be trodden down by nations; until [the] time of nations are fulfilled.

Notice that Jesus told the disciples that they would see this event. They had asked Him about their temple (verse 5), and Jesus told them it would be destroyed before their generation passed away (verse 32). Notice again what Jesus said in verse 24, "Jerusalem will be trodden down by nations; until [the] time of nations are fulfilled." This is the same thing Christ told John in Revelation 11:2. Therefore, since the disciples' generation has long since passed away, Revelation must have been written before the nations trampled Jerusalem under foot in AD 70.

### **The Woman**

The next thing that we need to look at is "the woman" found in chapters 17 and 18. John wrote that he saw "a woman...being drunk from the blood of the saints, and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" (17:6). The "woman" had this name written on her forehead: "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (17:5). The angel said that "the woman" was a poetic symbol of "the great city" (17:18); in whom "was found the blood of prophets and of saints and all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24; Then John wrote, "Be glad over her, Heaven and the holy apostles and the prophets, because God judged the judgment of you upon her...Babylon the great will be thrown down, and [it] will never more be found" (18:20, 21). So who was

this "woman?" This "great city?"

John gave us a clue in Revelation 11:8, where he wrote, "Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified." This shows us, as we saw above, that John was referring to the Jerusalem of his day.

To prove this assertion, let's look at the term "Sodom." John wrote that this is a "figurative" name. That means it does not tell us the actual name of the city, but it's spiritual condition. Once more, in letting the Bible interpret itself, we find this is a reference to Jerusalem. In Isaiah, chapter 1, after declaring that he had a "vision...concerning Judah and Jerusalem" (verse 1), Isaiah wrote, "Hear the words of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom..." (verse 10;). In Jeremiah 23:14, because of the adulterous prophets, God said that Jerusalem and her inhabitants had "become to Me like Sodom."

But what about "Egypt?" Nowhere in the Bible is Jerusalem called Egypt. However, the first century generation was also in an exodus. While Old Testament Israel's exodus was from the bondage of Egypt, the New Testament Israel's exodus was from the bondage of the Old Covenant Law. The most recognizable passage that depicts this "new exodus" is found in I Corinthians 10:1-11. Paul wrote, "And all these things happened to those [as] examples, and was written for our warning; to whom the ends of the ages have arrived." His contextual foundation for this statement was the Old Testament exodus from Egyptian bondage. He wrote that they had passed through the sea (verse 1). They ate manna and drank from the rock (verse's 3-4). He then relays how they wandered in the wilderness (verse 5), became idolaters (verse 7), tried the Lord and were destroyed by serpents (verse 9). This shows us that, just like the "type and shadow" of the Old Testament and their deliverance from bondage, the New Testament saints were undergoing the same exodus. The only difference was that Paul's generation was the reality to which the Old Testament example pointed.

Furthermore, in Luke 13:33-34, Jesus said, "[T]oday and tomorrow, and on the following [day], I must travel on, because it is not possible [for] a prophet to perish outside Jerusalem. Jerusalem! Jerusalem! The [one] killing the prophets, and stoning those having been sent to her." Then, in Matthew 23:29-37, Jesus blasted the Jews of His day for killing the prophets and the apostles. He declared that they are the children of their fathers who also killed the prophets. Then in verse 32, Jesus said that they would "complete the sin that your ancestors started". But the most crucial evidence is found in verse 35, where Jesus said, "upon you (i.e., the Jews of His day) may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on the earth". Then He said, "I tell you the truth, all of these things will happen to you people who are living now. Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone to death those who are sent to you" (verse's 36-37; NCV). In both passages, Jesus told the Jews of His day that they were guilty of "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth" (see also Acts 7:51-52).

Now let's put these pieces together. According to the gospels, Jesus said that His contemporary generation and their city would not pass away until they were judged for shedding "all the righteous blood shed on the earth." Furthermore, He said that it was "not possible" for a prophet to perish outside Jerusalem. In Revelation 17 and 18, John wrote that the "great city" was filled with "the blood of prophets, and saints, and all who had been slain on the earth." Furthermore the "great city" was judged and condemned by God, for God avenged "the holy apostles and the prophets...upon her." Therefore, since both of these passages deal with the same crime and the same judgment, the "great city" of Revelation must be the Jerusalem of Christ's generation. Which further proves that Revelation was been written before Jerusalem fell in AD 70.

## **The Sixth King**

**In Revelation 17:9-11**, the Angel told John, "Here is the mind having wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains, where the woman sits on them. And [there] are seven kings. The five fell, and the one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he does come, he must remain a little."

So far we have seen that Revelation deals with the revealing of Jesus to first century Israel. As noted above, "the woman" that John saw was first century Jerusalem. The "kings," therefore, were the rulers of the known world of John's day, i.e., the Roman Empire. The "kings" were not ruling at the same time, for the text stated "five fell," meaning that five of those kings had come and gone. Then "one is," meaning the "king" who was ruling at the time Revelation was written. Here in this verse, we have one of the clearest proofs for dating this book. If we simply examine the list of Roman Emperors, we will be able to determine who the sixth king was and the time Revelation was written. ***Here are the Roman Emperors: Julius Caesar; Augustus; Tiberius; Gaius (Caligula); Claudius; and the sixth emperor was Nero. Nero reigned from 54-68 AD.*** Here we find the terrible persecutors of the Christians whom God used to destroy the Jews. Nero was in power and he gave the command to Vespasian to destroy Jerusalem. This was the sixth king, proving beyond any doubt that Revelation was written before the Roman/Jewish war.

I believe that if we take all of this information into account, we have enough evidence to prove that Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. The reason I state that it was before the war is because this is what Revelation is about—the revealing of Christ to the Jewish nation of the first century and His judgment on them through the Roman Legions.

### **The Time Element**

Another essential point that we must consider is the time element contained in Revelation. There are numerous time statements, so we will just hit the highlights and reference the others.

Our first statements are contained in verses 1 and 3 of chapter 1. There, John wrote, "A Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show His slaves things which must occur with speed...for the time [is] near." Right off the bat, John informed his readers, the seven churches of Asia (verse 4, see above), that the contents of this volume "must shortly take place". Please note, that John did not write that some of the events, or even most of the events must shortly take place. He wrote that ***all*** of the events contained in Revelation "must occur with speed." Why? Why must those things "occur with speed?" Because "the time (was) near." Near for whom? It was the seven churches of Asia, specifically, and to the church of the first century in general. The time for what was near? "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

Remember, as we saw above, this is the main episode of Revelation.

Our next time statement is found in verse 6 of chapter 22. There, John wrote that the Lord sent an angel to John "to show His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place". Here, at the end of the volume, John recorded the exact same message that he did in chapter 1. This again emphasizes that all of the events contained in Revelation were about to take place in the first century -- not stretched throughout time, and certainly not for any future generation.

In verse 10 of the same chapter, the angel of the Lord said to John, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this Scroll, because the time is near." Once more, we have proof that the events of Revelation were about to take place in the first century. However, another element was added to this warning. The angel told John not to seal the Scroll. Why is this important? To answer that, let's look at the book of Daniel.

After Daniel had received visions concerning his people, the nation of Israel, he was told, "[E]veryone who is found written in the book will be rescued" (12:1). Daniel is then told how they would be rescued -- by resurrection, some would be rewarded with "everlasting life" and others with "everlasting contempt"

(verse 2). But then, Daniel is told something very peculiar. In verse 4, Daniel was told, "shut up the words, and seal the book, to the end-time." Please note, that in the Hebrew, the phrase is "the end-time," not "the end of time" as so many translations have it. There is a huge difference between the end of time and the time of the end or "the end-time." Now, we must ask "Whose end-time?" Verse 1 told us that Daniel's visions concerned the nation of Israel, not mankind in general. Next, Daniel saw two angels talking about the fulfillment of all that he had seen (verse 6). One asked the other, "When is the end of these wonders?" The answer was, "When they finish breaking the holy people's power, all these [things] shall be finished" (verse 7). But Daniel could not understand what they meant, so he asked again, "When?" What was Daniel's answer? "Go Daniel! For the words are closed up and sealed until the end-time." Now that we have looked at this passage, how does it relate to Revelation 21?

Did you know that there is only one other place to where a sealed book is referred? That place is Revelation, chapter 5. How Daniel relates to Revelation is that Revelation is the opening of Daniel's sealed book!! Remember, Daniel's visions were concerning the "end-time" of Israel, and Revelation is about God's judgment on Israel. They are one and the same. The reason this has direct bearing on Revelation 21, is that Daniel was told to seal his book concerning the end "for it pertains to many days in the future" (8:26), but John was told not to seal his book "because the time is near." The end of Old Covenant Israel was at hand. All things written had to be fulfilled by the time Jerusalem fell in AD 70 (see Luke 21:20-22). Therefore, since Revelation is the opening of Daniel, then it must have been fulfilled by the summer of AD 70.

Our next time statement is found in verse 12 of Revelation 21. There, Jesus told John, "And, behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward [is] with Me, to give to each as his work is." Notice that Jesus did not say that "when I come, I will come quickly," He emphatically said that He was "coming quickly." But He also said something else. He said that His reward was with Him "to give to each as his work is." There are some who state that this has not happened yet. There are even many "Preterists" who hold to this view. However, we must let Scripture interpret Scripture, and turn to Matthew 16:27-28.

There, Jesus told the disciples, "For the Son of man is about to come in the glory of His Father, with His angels. And then He will give reward to each according to his works." Now if you were standing there when Jesus spoke those words, how would you have understood them? Would you think that He was referring to some future group of disciples? Or would you have understood that He was speaking to you? Obviously, you would have thought that He was speaking to you and the other disciples with you. Since the text gives us no other explanation of those words, their natural meaning must be interpreted. Jesus said the exact same thing in Matthew 16 that He did in Revelation 21. In Revelation 21, He said He was coming and He was going to reward "each as his work is," and in Matthew 16, He said He was "about to come" and He would reward "each according to his works." These are the exact same "comings" with the exact same "rewards." But, in Matthew 16:28, Jesus said, "There are some standing here who in no way will taste death until they see the Son of man coming..." Notice that Jesus tied His coming to the lives of His disciples. He said that some would in "no way...taste death" until He came. But to whom is He coming? And what will be their reward? Jesus said that the "coming" would be to the first century generation of Israel (see Luke 21:27-32). Daniel told us that the "rewards" would be that some would be resurrected to "everlasting life" and others to "everlasting contempt and punishment" (see Matthew 13:36-43, 47-50; 25:46). Now, let's put these two passages together. Jesus said He was coming and He was going to reward each according to his works, and that some of the disciples wouldn't die until they saw this take place. Therefore, since all of the disciples are dead, Jesus must have returned and rewarded each according to his works. Furthermore, in Revelation, He said the same thing, therefore it must be fulfilled.

*Conclusion: So far, we have established that:*

1. *The tribes of the earth were the nation of Israel in the first century.*
2. *The seven churches in Asia were actual churches, and the only time that there were seven churches was around 61-62 AD.*
3. *John was to prophesy again.*
4. *The temple of Herod was still standing when John wrote Revelation.*
5. *The "woman" was a poetic symbol of the Jerusalem of John's day.*
6. *The sixth king was Nero Caesar. And...*
7. *"666" was a gematria code number for Nero Caesar.*

From these seven things, we can conclude, without any shadow of doubt, that Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Its contents deal with the judgment of God, through His providential use of Nero and the Roman Legions, upon first century Jerusalem for the shedding of all the righteous blood shed on the earth. With these things firmly established, how does the "millennium" or "thousand years" fit into this time frame?

## **Section 2**

AND I SAW AN ANGEL COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain on his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the old serpent, who is [the] Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut him up, and sealed over him, that he should not still mislead the nations, until the thousand years are completed; and after these things he must be loosed a little time.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them, and the souls of those having been beheaded due to the witness of Jesus, and because of the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast nor the image of it, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

### **Revelation 20:1-4**

This passage is used to support a host of "doctrines" such as: the second coming of Christ, a physical resurrection, Christ reigning on the earth for a literal thousand years, that His reign will be on the throne of David in Jerusalem, etc. Nevertheless, if we examine the passage closely, we will see that it does not mention any of those things.

Before we can properly interpret this passage, however, we must remember these things: **(1)** Its historical context is the first century. **(2)** The main characters and events are:

- (a) Christ and His appearing (revelation);*
- (b) the Jews who killed Him plus persecuted, tortured, and killed the Christians;*
- (c) Christ's revealing to those Jews;*
- (d) the city of Jerusalem;*
- (e) the Roman Empire; and*
- (f) Nero Caesar.*

*These verses can fit easily into this time period.*

Next, we need to determine what the term translated "*thousand*" means. The Greek word that John used here is found in only one other place in all of the New Testament -- 2 Peter 3. The Greek word is *cilioi*



(chiloi) and it means, "plural of uncertain affinity." In other words, in this case (as well as 2 Peter 3), the exact duration of the Messianic reign of Christ was an unknown length of time. To prove this definition, let's look briefly at 2 Peter 3.

**2 Peter 3:8.** But let not this one thing be hidden from you beloved, that one day with [the] Lord [is] as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

Is Peter actually suggesting that one of God's days is really a thousand human years or that a thousand of God's years are one day to us? Of course not! Peter's whole point is that God is outside of time. That He is not bound by time. Simply put, God is eternal (see: 1 Timothy 1:17). Therefore, how God, an eternal Being, equates to human time is unknown to us. It is beyond our understanding and knowledge. It is the same in Revelation. John was not giving the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 1:4) an exact time frame for the Messianic reign of Christ. He was stating that it had an unknown duration. What was known about it, however, was when it began (the ascension of Christ, Acts 2:29-31) and when it ended (when Christ's enemies were made His footstool; 1 Corinthians 15:24-25; Revelation 20:11). But my question is, "Can the Messianic reign of Christ be known now?" Post AD 70? I believe it can. ***The premise of this section is to prove that the "thousand years" were actually the forty year period from the ascension of Christ (AD 30) to His second coming, which brought about the end of the Old Covenant Age, and the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70).*** During which time, Christ reigned as Messiah. To do this we will examine some Old Testament examples of Christ as well as some prophetic passages.

### Moses: A Type of Christ

It almost goes without stating that Moses was a "type" of Christ. In Deuteronomy 18, Moses told the nation of Israel, "Jehovah your God shall raise up to you a Prophet from among you, of your brothers, [One] like me you shall listen to Him" (verse 15). Peter testified in Acts 3 that Moses was speaking about Christ (verses 19-26). Notice these similarities:

Parallels	Moses	Christ
<i>Contended with masters of evil</i>	<i>Exodus 7:11</i>	<i>Matthew 4:1</i>
<i>Controlled the sea</i>	<i>Exodus 14:21</i>	<i>Matthew 8:26</i>
<i>Discredited at home</i>	<i>Numbers 12:1</i>	<i>John 7:5</i>
<i>Endured Murmurings</i>	<i>Exodus 15:24</i>	<i>Mark 7:2</i>
<i>Established memorials</i>	<i>Exodus 12:14</i>	<i>Luke 22:19</i>
<i>Fasted 40 days</i>	<i>Exodus 34:28</i>	<i>Matthew 4:2</i>
<i>Fed Multitudes</i>	<i>Exodus 16:15</i>	<i>Matthew 14:20</i>
<i>Had 70 helpers</i>	<i>Numbers 11:16-17</i>	<i>Luke 10:1</i>
<i>Had a radiant face</i>	<i>Exodus 34:35</i>	<i>Matthew 17:2</i>
<i>Made intercession</i>	<i>Exodus 32:32</i>	<i>John 17:9</i>
<i>Preserved at childhood</i>	<i>Exodus 2:2-10</i>	<i>Matthew 2:14, 15</i>
<i>Re-appeared after death</i>	<i>Matthew 17:3</i>	<i>Acts 1:3</i>

The importance of this fact should not be overlooked. Moses was a "picture" of Christ. He was the "type and shadow" whereas Christ was the "reality." In fact, there are many comparisons of this in the New

Testament. For instance, in Hebrews 3 a very important comparison is made.

Hebrews 3:1-19. For which reason, holy brothers called [to be] partakers of a heavenly [calling], consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, being faithful to Him who appointed Him, as also Moses in all his house. For He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as the [one] having built by someone; but He who built all things [is] God. And Moses truly [was] faithful in all his house as a ministering servant, for a testimony of the things having been spoken; but Christ as Son over His house, whose house we are, if we hold fast the boldness and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

For this reason even as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, there where your fathers tempted Me, testing Me, and saw My works forty years. Because of this, I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in heart; and they did not know My ways;' so I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter into My rest.'"

Watch, brothers, lest perhaps shall be in any one of you a heart of evil unbelief in falling away from [the] living God. But exhort yourselves each day, as long as it is being called today, that not any of you be hardened by [the] deceit of sin. For we have become sharers of Christ, if truly we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to [the] end; [as] in the saying, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation." For hearing, some provoked [Him]. But not all those coming out of Egypt through Moses. But with whom was He angry forty years? [Was it] not with the ones sinning, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear [they would] not enter into His rest, except to those not obeying?

And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

In this passage, we not only have a comparison of Moses and Christ, but also the people that each one delivered. There is a similarity between these two events Israel "after the flesh" was delivered by Moses from Egyptian bondage, whereas Israel "after the Spirit" was delivered by Christ from Old Covenant bondage. This is the same thing that the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

**In 1 Corinthians 10**, he wrote: *"And I desire you not to be ignorant, brothers, that fathers of us were all under the cloud; and all passed through the Sea. And all were baptized to Moses in the cloud, and in the Sea; and all ate the same spiritual food. And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of the spiritual rock following -- and that Rock was Christ. But in the most of them God was not well pleased; for they were scattered in the desert. And these things were examples of us, for us not to be lusters after evil, even as those indeed lusted. Neither be idolaters, even as some of them [were], as it has been written, 'The people sat to eat and drink and stood up to play.' Neither do fornication, even as some of them fornicated, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Neither over tempt the Christ, even as also some of them tempted, and were destroyed by serpents. Neither murmur even as also some of them murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer. And all these things happened to those [as] examples, and was written for warning us, to whom the end of the ages has arrived".*

Paul very clearly taught that the exodus of Old Covenant Israel was the "example," or the "type and shadow," for the exodus of New Covenant Israel's reality. That is to say, the exodus of Israel "after the flesh" was a physical picture of what the real exodus was to be like -- the spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin-death.

Now with this in mind, we need to determine the duration of Moses' reign over the nation of Israel. In doing so, we can conclude how long the Messianic reign of Christ was. We find our answer in the book of Acts.

**Acts 7:36-37.** This one led them out, doing wonders and signs in [the] land of Egypt, and in [the] Red Sea, and in the desert forty years. This is the Moses [who] said to the sons of Israel, "The Lord God of you will raise up a prophet from the brothers of you, like me, Him you shall hear."

Now I realize this is not a "heavy reavy" for some of you, however, it is an important part of this study. If Moses was a "type of the One coming," and his reign was forty years, it would stand to reason that Christ's Messianic reign would also be forty years.

### **David: A type of Christ**

The other Old Testament person we want to look at is David. David was promised that one of his seed would be established on his throne.

**2 Samuel 7:12.** When your days are fulfilled, and you lie with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, who will come from your loins, and I will establish his kingdom.

**Psalms 132:11.** Jehovah has sworn to David [in] truth; He will not turn from it. Of the fruit of your body will I set on the throne for you.

Somewhere along the line, David's seed became "David."

**Jeremiah 30:9.** [B]ut they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up to them.

**Ezekiel 34:23-24.** And I will raise up over them one shepherd. And He shall feed them; My servant David, He shall feed them; and He shall be to them for a shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God; and My servant David [shall be] a ruler among them. I, Jehovah, have spoken.

**Ezekiel 37:24-25.** And My Servant, David, [shall be] king over them. And there shall be one Shepherd to all of them. And they shall walk in My judgments and statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell on the land that I have given to My servant, to Jacob, [there] where your fathers dwelt in it. And they shall dwell on it, they and their sons, and the sons of their sons, forever. And My Servant, David [shall be] a ruler to them forever.

Of particular interest is a prophecy found in Hosea.

**Hosea 3:5.** Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God and David their King; and they will come trembling to the Lord and to His goodness in the last days.

Notice that "David" would be Israel's king "in the last days." From this we can conclude that this "David" was a symbolic reference of Christ. In fact, He was from the lineage of David and was called the "Son of David" on various occasions. Also notice that "David" would be a shepherd to God's people (Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25). This should remind us of Christ's own words:

**John 10:11.** I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

**John 10:14.** I am the Good Shepherd, and I know those that [are] Mine; and I am known by the [ones that are] Mine.

The disciples also recognized and understood the significance of this reference.

**Hebrews 13:20.** Now the God of Peace, He leading up out of [the] dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in [the] blood of [the] everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus.

**1 Peter 5:4.** And [at] the appearing of the Chief Shepherd, you will receive the never fading crown of glory.

**Revelation 7:17.** Because the Lamb in the midst of the throne will shepherd them, and will lead them on the living fountains of waters; and God will wipe off every tear from their eyes.

It should be obvious from these verses that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of those prophecies cited above. Now if David and his reign as king over Israel after the flesh was the "type and shadow" for Christ's Messianic reign over Israel after the Spirit, then to be able to determine the length of Christ's Messianic reign, we must determine the length of David's reign over the nation of Israel.

**2 Samuel 5:4.** And David was a son of thirty years when he became king; he reigned forty years.

**1 Kings 2:11.** And the days that David ruled over Israel [were] forty years. He ruled seven years in Hebron, and he ruled thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

Thus, if Christ is the reality to which the above Messianic prophecies pointed, and David was a "type" of Christ, and his reign was forty years, it stands to reason that the Messianic reign of Christ would also be forty years.

This idea is not a new one. There are many Christians and Jews who feel that the Messianic reign would be forty years. Here are but a few:

**B.F. Westcott** (1889). Jewish teachers distinguished a 'present age' (this age) from 'that age' (the age to come). Between 'the present age' of imperfection and conflict and trial and 'the age to come' of the perfect reign of God they placed 'the days of the Messiah,' which they sometimes reckoned in the former, sometimes in the latter, and sometimes distinct from both. They were, however, commonly agreed that the passage from one age to the other would be through a period of intense sorrow and anguish, 'the travail-pains' of the new birth (Mt. 24:8). The apostolic writers, fully conscious of the spiritual crisis through which they were passing speak of their own time as the 'last days' (Acts 2:17; James 5:3; comp. 2 Tim. 3:1); the 'last hour' (1 Jno. 2:18); the 'end of the times' (1 Peter 1:20; 2 Pet. 3:3); 'the last time' (Jude 18).

**Lohse, TDNT.** The idea of the millennium which the divine works out here is to be understood against the backdrop of the Jewish apocalyptic traditions that he adopts and uses in the expectation of an intermediate Messianic kingdom which shall precede the end and the coming of the reign of God, Eth. En. 91:12f; 93:1-14; Sib., 3, 652-660; 4 Esr. 7:28f; S. Bar. 29:3; 30:1-5; 40:3, two forms of eschatological hope are combined. According to the older view the Messiah will be the end-time king restoring the Davidic monarchy and raising it to new heights. In apocalypics, however, a very different concept of the future age of salvation develops. On this view God's envoy will appear from heaven, the dead will rise again at his coming, and all men must come before his judgment-seat. Later an attempt was made to fuse the older national concept with the universal eschatology by putting the reign of the Messiah-King before

the end of the world and the beginning of the new aeon. The earthly Messianic age will be for a limited term and it will be followed by a last assault of the powers of chaos prior to the commencement of the future world (**TDNT, Vol. IX, page 470**).

**H. J. Schoeps** (1966). (On the traditional views concerning the length of the intermediate Messianic kingdom) [F]ix a very short interval for the interim period, namely, forty years (R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus; Bar in Sanh. 99a; R. Aqiba: Midr. Teh. on Ps 90:15; Tanch. Egeb 7b, Pes. Rabb. 4a). The two Tannaites, commenting on Ps 95:7, derive this time indication from the Messianically understood v.10 ("forty years I loathed that generation") and from Deut. 8:2 by a parallelization with the forty years in the desert (Paul, page 100).

With all of this information, we can safely conclude that the "thousand years" John mentioned in Revelation 20 was actually the forty year period between the ascension of Christ (AD 30) to His second and final coming at the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70). It was at that time, before that "generation passed away" (Matthew 24:34) that "all things written" were fulfilled (Luke 21:22).

### **Summary**

Well, that about does it. This has been a fast (maybe too fast) look at the "thousand years" of Revelation 20. As was shown above (conclusively, I hope), the Messianic reign of Christ (the "thousand years") was the forty year period between His ascension in AD 30 and the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The characters and events of Revelation are: Christ and His appearing (revelation); the Jews who killed Him plus persecuted, tortured, and killed the Christians; Christ's revealing to those Jews; the city of Jerusalem; the Roman Empire; and Nero Caesar. The contents of Revelation, therefore, are concerned with the judgment of God upon the apostate Jewish nation. The reason for this was because they rejected the warnings of the prophets and apostles. They, in turn, killed those holy men of God. Revelation was God avenging them upon Israel that was accomplished by the Roman Legions while Nero Caesar was in power.

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