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Conducted by  
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**“Could you please throw some light on Rev. 20, with particular reference to the thousand years’ reign? Some of my friends speak so often about the millennium and the reign of Christ on this earth for a thousand years that I would like some information on the subject.”**

This is a difficult subject, and one which cannot easily be discussed in a short article such as “Question Box,” but I shall advance a few comments for what they are worth. For the present, perhaps it would be best to show in this month’s article what Revelation 20 *does not* teach, and later to try to show what it *does teach*. I am convinced that a thousand years reign of Jesus on earth is not taught in this passage, and shall try to show why. The common idea held with reference to Rev. 20 is that at the end of time Jesus will return to earth and reign for a thousand years with His saints. Some also believe that Christ will return to the holy city, Jerusalem, and occupy the

throne of David. The New Testament, apart from the Revelation, leaves us in no doubt that Jesus will certainly never return to this earth, let alone to Jerusalem, and will not begin a reign of one thousand years' duration when He does come. Once we have established with certainty this important fact, then those of us who wish may speculate as to what *is* meant by Rev. 20 and the rest.

We are in the last economy of God on earth, and are privileged to be living in the latter times of God; the last days. Heb. 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by His son . . ."; 2 Peter 3:3: "Knowing this first, that there shall come *in the last days* scoffers, walking after their own lusts." (See also 2 Tim. 3:1; James 5:3).

We are living in the last days and some day the last days will draw to a close and we shall reach the very last day of time. Logic and common reasoning demand that the last days shall have a *last day*—one final day when time shall end and eternity shall be ushered in. The New Testament appropriately concedes this obvious fact and actually indicates to us some of the momentous events which will attend that great and awful day.

#### The Last Day

Let us notice some of the things which will take place on the last day, and see if any man is justified scripturally in contending that Jesus will come and reign for a thousand years on the last day.

##### (1) JESUS WILL RETURN.

The *fact* of Christ's return is certain; the *time* is absolutely unknown, albeit some modern prophets with a mathematical bent assure us that the time of His return can be found by a somewhat simple mathematical calculation in the book of Daniel. Jesus said the angels did not know of the time of His return, neither did He himself know. One would have thought that Jesus would have been familiar enough with the book of Daniel to make the simple calculation himself if such had been possible. Mark 13:32: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." The coming of the Lord is thus always imminent—as imminent as a ripe fig ready to drop from the tree: the fig is ripe but who can say when it will fall? Jesus will come visibly—"every eye shall see Him"—and audibly *i.e.* to the accompaniment of a great shout, the trumpet and the voice of the archangel. Neither shall He come alone but shall be accompanied by His mighty angels. Jesus shall come so audibly that He shall literally waken the dead. He shall come in power and great glory, and it is important that we should notice why He is coming and to give due regard to the events which will occur *simultaneously* with His appearance.

(2) Simultaneously with Christ's coming will be the GENERAL AND ONLY RESURRECTION (The Revelation talks of the first and second resurrections). John 5:28 "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which *all* that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth." That this will all happen in a twinkling rules out the theory of a long space of years between the rising of the dead in Christ and the rest of the dead. 1 Cor. 15:52: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The trumpet (last trump) will sound *when Christ comes* and *at the resurrection* (one and the same time), *i.e.* the last day. John 6:44: "No man can come to me except the Father (which hath sent me) draw him; and I will raise him up *at the last day*." This is "the last day" of which mention was made earlier.

(3) THE JUDGEMENT will be simultaneous with Christ's coming, and indicates that He is coming not to reign but to judge,—2 Thess. 1:7: "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." This surely links up the time of judgement with the coming of Jesus, and shows that He is coming



to judge the world and not to reign on earth for a thousand years or any other length of time. Paul urged Timothy: "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1). Both those alive and those dead will be judged when Christ returns. The Bible will cease from being a guide book and will become an indictment and basis of the judgement. John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him *in the last day.*" Once again we notice the term "the last day," and can see that the judgement will take place on the same day as the resurrection and the day of Christ's return. (See also Rev. 20:11-15, and parables such as is contained in Matt. 25).

(4) THE ASCENSION will take place at the coming of the Lord on the last day.

A brief quotation from 1 Thess. chapter 4 suffices to assure us of this, and also without a doubt to indicate to us that Jesus will never again set foot upon the earth, let alone spend a thousand years in Jerusalem. Verses 15-18: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

(5) At Christ's coming THE EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED.

2 Peter 3:9-11: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise [of Christ's return] as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and Godliness." No reign on earth therefore at Christ's coming—no earth. Jesus' coming is delayed that none might perish, for after His coming there will be no extra days of grace or second chances during the so-called millennium. We have no abiding city here but Jesus is preparing one now in heaven, and this is God's gift and promise to both Jew and Gentile. The Jews need never strive to refurbish the holy city and foster national aspirations in Palestine because God's promises are spiritual and the promised land is in many mansions beyond the skies.

#### "The End"

When one considers these many happenings to take place on the last day of these last days and the positive finality of it all when Jesus comes again, one has difficulty, I suggest, in finding room for a reign of a thousand years and indeed for finding time or room for anything at all, "seeing that all these things shall be dissolved." The concept of "the thousand years" of Rev. 20 must therefore have some spiritual or metaphorical application.

Jesus is reigning now (and has been for about two thousand years) over His spiritual kingdom and will continue to do so until the last enemy (death) shall have been destroyed (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). "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 authority and power." The end will be not the time to reign but to cease from reigning—the time to hand the kingdom over to the Heavenly Father.