

“The Thousands Years”

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And I saw a messenger come down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the slanderer, and the adversary, and bound him a thousands years, And cast him into the abyss, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousands years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw the life/soul 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 thousands years.* But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousands years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. 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 thousands years. And when the thousands years are expired, the adversary shall be loosed out of his prison, 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:1-15, emphasis and comments added)

Many preterists insist that the “thousands years” in the above passage is fulfilled in the 40 year period between the ascension of Jesus Christ and the destruction of

Jerusalem in 70 AD. Thus from their perspective the “thousands years” becomes 40 years. We don’t think so! (For the details of how they think that the “thousands years” was actually “forty years” you will need to find and read their works.)

Those that make this claim, usually use high sounding terms like “hermeneutic,” “the primary task,” “exegesis,” etc. Some of them have actually offered relatively extensive explanations of the hermeneutic that should be used and their reasons for their claim that the “thousands years” was really only the 40 years between the ascension of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem. Although we have read several attempts to justify “the thousands years actually was only forty years” view, up to the time of the writing of this paper; this researcher has never seen a document produced by one of those proponents of the “40 year” view that actually gave a careful, hermeneutically sound, exegesis of the passage itself. This paper is our attempt to do that, and we think it will clearly demonstrate that **the “thousands years” actually began at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem,** not at the ascension of Christ.

As for our hermeneutic: We think that the primary task for understanding Scripture correctly is trying to understand **what the writer meant** by what he wrote within the time frame of which he wrote the text in question. The secondary task is to **determine the style of the text** (literal, parabolic, apocalyptic, and symbolic, etc.) The third task is to understand **what the writer expected his first readers to understand** from what he wrote. The fourth task, determine the **thought context of the original readers**. The fifth task, determine the **application** the text has for us.

The “thousands years” does not appear in isolation in this passage so let us begin with verses one (1) through three (3):

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the slanderer, and the adversary, and bound him **thousands years**, And cast him into the abyss, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until **the thousands years** should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a short while.

God gave the Revelation unto Jesus Christ, to show unto the servants of Jesus things which must **shortly come to pass** and Jesus sent and signified it by messenger to John. Therefore, the scribe is the apostle John, the place where the message was received is on the isle of Patmos, the time is ca. 46 AD, and the style is apocalyptic revelation with a literal meaning. At this point there are a number of questions that we should ask ourselves about Revelation 20:

1. What or who is the “messenger?”
2. What is the “**heaven**”? Where is it located?
3. What does this “**key**” of the abyss represent?
4. What is the “**abyss**”? Where is it located?
5. What is the “**great chain**” that is in the angel’s hand?
6. What or who is the character described as the “dragon, that old serpent, which is the slanderer, and **the adversary**”?
7. What is the meaning of the “binding, shutting up, and sealing over” of this adversary in the abyss?
8. What is the “**seal**” that is placed “upon him”?
9. What is actually encompassed by the phrase “that he should **deceive the nations no more**”?

(For the answers to some of these questions see this writer’s paper entitled “the Abyss” at www.lloyddale.com) Whatever and/or whoever all these things are, these events must all take place before the thousands years could begin! The problem with the proponents of the “40 years” view¹ is that they all assume that they know the answers to these questions, when in reality it seems that they have not even bothered to ask the questions, let alone correctly answer them.

Now let’s take a look at verse four:

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw **the lives/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 thousands years...This is the first resurrection.**

Look carefully at this verse. The primary subject of the verse is those “**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...**”

This verse must be understood upon the foundation shown below:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar **the lives/souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: *And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the land?***

¹ For a careful and thoughtful refutation of the “40 year Millennium view see my paper entitled “Timing of the Millennium—response to Preston” on the website: www.lloyddale.com

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a short time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that are about to be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. (Revelation 6:9-11)

Now it is clear from the context of these verses that these witnesses of Jesus, and the word had not taken the mark of the beast, etc. and **were killed by beheading and other means**. The last time we checked a person that is beheaded dies instantly. In other words **all** of those that were to be martyred in this context were martyred **before the “thousands years” started; THEN they were to live** (be resurrected) **and kingdom with Christ during the entire “thousands years.”** They were not martyred **during** the “thousands years.” They were martyred during the forty years preparation period before the transition into the kingdom which occurred at the “resurrection and change” described by Paul as follows:

Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 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.** For this corruptible (dead and buried) must put on incorruption (through resurrection), and this mortal (living) *must* put on immortality (by being changed). (1 Corinthians 15:51-53, emphasis added)

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.** (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

These martyrs, actually beginning with Abel², moving forward to John the Baptist (Matt.14:1-12) and then Stephen (Acts 7:57-60) and probably concluding with either the apostle Paul (c. 65 AD) or the apostle John, were martyred before and during the 40 year preparation (i.e. transition) period between the **CROSS** and the **PAROUSIA of Jesus Christ, at which time the “thousands years” began.** The apostle Peter gives us, at least, a partial reason for this 40 year transition period:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise (judgment on Jerusalem), as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to toward us, **not willing that any should perish** (in the judgment on Jerusalem, etc.), **but that all should come to repentance.** (2 Peter 3:9, emphasis added)

Jesus also spoke of this in Luke 11:29-33:

² Beginning with Able -- Jesus explains this to the Jews in Mt 23:35, Lu 11:51, see also Heb 11:4, Heb 12:24

And when the people were gathered thick together, He began to say, this is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonah the prophet. 30 For as ***Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this (first century) generation.*** (Lu 11:29, emphasis added)

After his ‘resurrection’ from his “crucifixion in the abyss,” Jonah preached in Nineveh for 40 days to warn them of their impending judgment and destruction, thus, after His resurrection from His crucifixion in the abyss (place of judgment), Jesus preached for forty days among the Jews to warn them of their impending destruction in Jerusalem. The Ninevites repented and were spared; the Jews did not repent, and were destroyed. (For additional documentation of this see this writer’s book The Oracle of Destruction on the website: www.lloyddale.com)

The queen of the south shall ***rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them:*** for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is here.* ***The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah;*** and, behold, a greater than Jonah *is here.* (Lu 11:31-32, emphasis added)

Dear ones, do you really see what these verses declare? The “righteous” Queen of the south and the “righteous” (repentant) Ninevites will “rise up” (be resurrected) in judgment of the men of this generation at the end of that first century generation (a generation is 40 years, in this case from the cross to the PAROUSIA destruction of Jerusalem)

Don’t you see it? If we are to accept the transition period (40 years) between the cross and the destruction of Jerusalem in the day of the Lord as the “thousands years,” we do the text and the context of these things great harm.

The text clearly states that those who were martyred during the time frame of the “worship” and “the mark” of the “beast” were to **live** (which necessitated resurrection because they had been killed by the beast and/or the Jews), and **reign** with Christ for the “thousands years.”

In our candid opinion, the only possible legitimate understanding of these passages is that **the first century Christians who were to be martyred during the transition period were resurrected in the 70 AD PAROUSIA of Jesus Christ.** As a result of that resurrection of those “that are Christ’s in His PAROUSIA” (1Cor.15:23c), “...they **lived** and **reigned** with Christ a thousands years.” Therefore, the text clearly establishes that the “thousands years” began in 70 AD and

continues into the future from 70 AD until a predetermined but undisclosed point in time.

The apostle addressed the subjects of suffering (which could include martyrdom) and resurrection in His second letter to Timothy. Paul states:

*It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*: **If we suffer** (for Christ), **we shall also kingdom with *him***: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us: (2 Timothy 2:11-12, emphasis and comment added)*

In verse 11 Paul very clearly anticipates a future resurrection to “life;” then in the same context of future events, Paul told Timothy that those that “suffer” (martyrdom) for Jesus Christ “shall also kingdom with *Him*” following the resurrection anticipated in verse 11. Given the language of this verse, it is obvious that Paul did not see himself or Timothy kingdomeing with Christ at the time that Paul penned this letter. In fact, Paul even instructed Timothy that if they should “deny *Him*” Christ would “deny” them salvation (vs.10) and the privilege of reigning with Him in the resurrection. This is irrefutable proof that the “1000 year reign” of Christ in Revelation 20:4d did not start, **indeed could not start** until the 70 AD resurrection in the Parousia of Jesus.

Please note that there is nothing in the Revelation text that states or even implies that the reign of Christ and these martyred saints would **end** after the “thousands years,” but it is obvious that there is something special about the “thousands year reign.” That something special, at least in part, includes the fact that “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousands years were finished.”

Now the really big and important question is: **Can those of us living in the 21st century determine when the “thousands years” is to end, or, as the case may be, ended?** We think that this may be possible! (For details see our paper entitled “the Abyss”)

The text clearly states that “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousands years were finished.” **Who are these** “rest of the dead”? Before we answer that question let’s take a look at **the reign of Christ**. In order to do this we need to take a look at **the kingdom in which He is to reign!**

Among other things, Daniel informs us that **the kingdom** (read that “reign”) of Christ will be established during the days of the kings of the Empires represented by Nebuchadnezzar’s “image” (Dan.2:40-44). The New Testament informs us that it was actually established during time of the Roman Empire. This kingdom **will never be destroyed**, never be left to another people, it will break and consume all kingdoms, and that **“it shall stand forever.”** Now what part of **“forever”** don’t we understand?

However, Daniel did not leave the matter at that point, for later he continued:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like **the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days**, and they brought Him near before Him. **And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom**, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: **His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away**, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

A “forever” kingdom that is “everlasting” doesn’t sound like “40 years” to us, does it to you? The New Testament confirms the concept of the everlasting reign of Christ:

And **He shall reign** over the house of Jacob **for ever**; and **of his kingdom there shall be no end**. (Luke 1:33, emphasis added)

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into **the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. (2 Peter 1:11)

And the seventh messenger sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world ***are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His*** (Yahweh’s) **Christ**; and He (Jesus Christ) **shall reign for ever and ever**. (Rev.11:15, emphasis and comments added)

Rev 11:15; which is better translated as follows:

"And the seventh messenger trumpets; and this causes great voices to be heard in the heaven, saying, (thus) 'Becomes the kingdom world of our Lord (Jesus Christ)' and of His (God, the Father’s) Christ, and He (Christ) shall reign into the ages of the ages."

This verse clearly parallels 1Cor 15:23c, 1Thess 4:14-17, and Rev 20:4b and identifies the Parousia of Jesus with the resurrection of His people, the beginning of the heavenly Kingdom populated by the resurrected Christ and His resurrected people and the 'thousands years' reign of Christ with His resurrected saints. These points are clearly here: (1) the sounding of the trumpet which began the first resurrection (2) the resurrection of those that belong to Christ (3) the beginning of the Kingdom upon the resurrection into paradise - see Luke 23:43 - where Jesus told the thief on the cross beside Him that the thief would Join

Christ in paradise on the day that Christ came into His kingdom (4) the 'thousands years reign'.

This kingdom that Daniel wrote about is referenced more than 150 times in the New Testament. Matthew generally refers to it as the kingdom of heaven, although a few times he calls it the kingdom of God. Mark, Luke and John generally refer to it as the kingdom of God, however, it is sometimes just called the kingdom, and a few times it is called the kingdom of Christ and God. In the epistles it is usually referred to as the kingdom of God, but at least once, Paul refers to it as “His heavenly kingdom” (2Tim 4:18).

A detailed study of this kingdom is beyond the scope of this paper³, however, it is essential that we note some particulars of this kingdom as it is described in the New Testament.

Jesus Christ, speaking about this kingdom, said:

...from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven is being forced and the forceful seize upon it. (Mt 11:12). The law and the prophets were until John (the Baptist): **since that time the kingdom of God is preached**, and every man presses into it. (Luke 16:16, emphasis and comment added)

The salient point that we get from these statements is that the approach of the kingdom began with John the Baptist, and “**since that time the kingdom of God (was) preached**” throughout the inhabited earth, until the scene described in **Revelation 7 was completely fulfilled, and all those that had come into Christ (the Ark of Salvation) during that time rested in heaven “before the throne of Jesus Christ”** (v. 15, see also 3:21; 15:11 shown above, emphasis added).

In Matthew 13:11 it is written that “it is given unto (the disciples) to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to (the apostate population of Jews) it is not given” to know the mysteries of the kingdom. Thus, first John the Baptist, then Jesus, the apostles, and other first century disciples preached “the gospel of the kingdom in all the inhabited world (Rom.1:5, 10:18, 16:25-26; Col.1:6, 16, & 23) for a witness unto all nations; and then the end” (of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant which was encompassed within the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD) came (Matt.24:14) and the New Marriage Covenant in Jesus Christ was fully established, consummated (Rev. 12:10, et al.), and followed by the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev.19:9, 21:1-3, 9b-22:6).

³ For a detailed study of this kingdom see my kingdom series.

Mark recorded that:

Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counselor, which **also waited for the kingdom of God**, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. (Mark 15:43)

Thus did Mark affirm that the followers of Christ, which include Joseph, waited for the kingdom from the day of the cross until the PAROUSIA of Christ in 70 AD which was the inauguration of the kingdom and the beginning of the “thousands year reign of Christ with these saints resurrected in the first century!”

In Matthew 21:43 Jesus told the Jews that “the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” And that for the Jews “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. (Luke 13:28) Jesus expands on the idea of this reversal of roles in Luke 16:19-31.

Without going into all the details here, the nation that would bring forth this fruit is **New Covenant Israel**, otherwise known as Christianity. (This is extensively documented in other works by this writer) The people of this redeemed nation “...shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and **shall sit down in the kingdom** of God. (Luke 13:29)

Luke writes that “when He (Jesus) was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, the kingdom of God comes not with observation:...for the kingdom of God is in your midst.” (Luke 17:20-21)

In response to Daniel’s prophecy:

But **the saints** of the most High **shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever**. (Daniel 7:18)

Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and **the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom**. (Daniel 7:22)

And **the kingdom and dominion**, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, **shall be given to the people** of the saints of the most High, **whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom**, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Daniel 7:27)

Jesus told the disciples “...**I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** (Luke 22:29-30, emphasis added. Did you notice what Jesus said here, there are only “the twelve tribes of Israel” in His “kingdom.”)

In the verses quoted directly above, Jesus clearly stated that the kingdom was **His Kingdom**. The author of the letter to the Hebrews also expresses this fact:

But **unto the Son** (Jesus Christ) He (Yahweh) said, **Your throne, O God** (Jesus Christ), **is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your kingdom.** (Hebrews 1:8)

If any should doubt that Jesus Christ is God, they should read this verse again and take it to heart; for here Yahweh God clearly calls the Son (Jesus Christ) “God!” They should also re-read very carefully Isaiah 9:6 which, among other things, specifically states that He shall be called “the mighty God!”

Jesus “appointed unto the (disciples) a kingdom,” and the apostle Paul writes of the first century Christians, “if **we** (first century Christians) suffer, **we shall also kingdom together**: if we deny *Him*, he also will deny us: (2Ti 2:12) ...that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer.” (2Thess.1:5). Luke writes that the first century Christians “...**must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.**” (Acts 14:22) And John states that He “...has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall kingdom over the earth, (Re 5:10) from the heavenly kingdom, “...there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and **they** (His suffering servants of the first century) **shall kingdom for ever and ever.** (Rev. 22:5, comments and emphasis added)

In c. 60 AD the author of Hebrews wrote that, the first century Christians (Redeemed Israel) were “...**receiving a kingdom** which cannot be moved...” (Hebrews 12:28) In other words, although the kingdom had been announced by John the Baptist (Matt.3:1-2; Lu.16:16, et al.), preached by Jesus (Matt.9:35, et al.) and His disciples (Matt.10:17, Lu.9:2, et al.); **it had not been fully received by the saints as of the writing of that letter** (c. 60AD). When would the kingdom be completely received, i.e. fully given? The answer is clearly given by Jesus Christ:

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ**: for **the accuser** of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (Revelation 12:10, emphasis added)

According to the verse quoted above “**the kingdom...and the power of...Christ**” **fully came when “the accuser of (the) brethren (was) cast down.”** Who was the accuser?” When was “the accuser...cast down?” The Bible gives, to some at least, a surprising answer. More than 33 times, the Bible declares that the Jews were the accuser of the brethren (Christians), as is demonstrated below!

On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was **accused of the Jews**, he loosed him from [his] bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them. (Ac 22:30, emphasis added)

And when I would have known the cause wherefore **they accused him**, I brought him forth into their council: (Ac 23:28, emphasis added)

Unto which our twelve tribes, instantly serving day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, **I am accused of the Jews**. (Ac 26:7, emphasis added)

The Jews were the “accuser of the brethren” and the power of the Jews was broken and the accuser was tromped under the feet of the Romans (Rom.16:20) and cast down at the time of the destruction of their temple and the city of Jerusalem in 70 AD. **How much clearer can it be? The “thousands years” did not “end” in 70 AD, it started in 70 AD**, and as we show in our paper entitled “The Abyss,” the “thousands years” may have ended in 1948.

That Truth may prevail.

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