

# Understanding the Millennium and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming

The topic of the Millennium occurs in Revelation 20:1-6, and is the only specific reference to this duration. Through studying the scriptures, many have attributed many characteristics to this period, which makes it then the time of the fulfillment of many of the yet unfulfilled prophecies of Old Testament, including the promises to national Israel of a nation-wide salvation (Ezekiel 38-39, Romans 11:26, etc). This proves to be faulty based on a number of wrong assumptions, and wrong reading of various texts, based largely on a translation issue in Matthew 24:29.

The understanding of the return of Christ must first of all be understood to be wholly separate from the Great Tribulation events in Matthew 24, after a right reading of that passage. Matthew 24:29 traditionally has read “Immediately after...”, but proves to have been imprecisely translated. Rather, the word there comes from the Greek word for “straight”, and a better rendition of the text would read “Next, but after...” Others have also objected, saying that v36, referring to “all these things”, must refer to everything previously mentioned in the chapter. This, too though, is in negligence to the verses following, which reads as a whole, “All these things will happen within a generation . . . but that day no one knows the day or hour”. Since “that day and hour” can only refer to the v29-31 event (none of the other events of either Matthew 23-24:31 are pointing to a specific day and hour), the time clause in v34,36 itself excludes the Second Coming events from the “this generation” condition. Removing the “immediately” of v29 and the false need to include v29-31 in v34, we come to a clear focus that the Great Tribulation was solidly in 70 AD (since Matthew 24:1-3 was talking about the then visible buildings), and all we know of the timing the Second Coming event is that it occurs after this destruction, at an unknown time. <sup>1</sup>

This would then be the understanding of Paul when he wrote 2 Thessalonians. He begins by describing the Second Coming in chapter 1, and says in chapter 2 that it could not have happened yet because the destruction of Jerusalem hadn't yet occurred. While he does not name Jerusalem expressly in chapter 2 as the subject matter, the date of the letter, and the indications in the text that the readers then understood who he was talking about give it strong credence. The “great apostasy” he mentions would have been the rebellion of the Jews a couple years later, and the restrainer most likely the priesthood who the rebels murdered. The man of lawlessness was also a historical figure of that time, and in no way connected to a future anti christ, or the beast of Revelation 13. With the removal of “immediately” in Matthew 24:29, the whole scope of prophetic interpretation can be removed from the need to create one last super-villain at the end of the age. There have been and will continue to be demonically inspired men throughout history, but that does not initiate the need to equate every description of evil as an ultimate persona.

Additionally, clearing up the interpretation of prophetic scriptures, we would need to take a quick look at Daniel 11-12. This is the longest continuous prophecy on the end times, and is often taken to be a future anti christ. However, while Daniel 11 starts out in antiquity, with the second beast of Daniel 7, we see a standard interpretation of events up through about v35. However, while commentators disagree on the exact fulfillment, Daniel 11:40-43 is a clear portrayal of the Battle of Actium, involving the first emperor of Rome, Octavius. This, then, is the scope of Daniel 11 and so the end of Daniel 11 at the beginning of the fourth Beast brings us then to Daniel 12, with Michael the Great Prince who stood up in the time of Jesus, and the Great Tribulation, just like Matthew 24 indicated, being in 70 AD.

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<sup>1</sup> See the document on [The Olivet Discourse \(Matthew 24\)](#) for further exposition of “eutheos de meta” in v29 and the clear, intentional separation of the two events in the language of the chapter.

Thus, in the understanding that many of the scriptures attributed to it do not actually have the significance indicated, we can come to the scriptures that clearly do speak of the Second Coming with less in the way.

We come next to Paul's description of Jesus' position now, after His ascension.

[B]ut He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.

Hebrews 10:12-13

In Hebrews 10:12-13, Paul quotes from Psalm 110:1 (See also Acts 2:34-35 where Peter also used this verse on the day of Pentecost). In this passage, however, Paul clearly says that Jesus has *sat down* at the right hand of the Father (v12), and that this is an already accomplished thing. Now, some would claim that this sitting is not the promised “Throne of David”, and that that must wait until the Millennium. They would say that the taking dominion over all of His enemies will not occur until that time and that, until then, Jesus is only the throne of the Father. While what are seen as failures in that argument could be discussed in another portion, the points being drawn out here should be seen regardless.

What is clear from this passage says is that Christ must remain upon the throne, seated with the Father, “until” his enemies are made subject. Now, let us compare this to Paul in 1 Corinthians.

But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

1 Corinthians 15:23-26

Here, we see the second coming described in v23, stating that those who are Christ's at His coming will come to life. Many people, in the need to see the Second Coming immediately after the Tribulation, before the Millennium, then describe Jesus' Second coming between v23 and v24, before “Then comes the end”. However, Hebrews 10:13 shows that Christ cannot leave the throne of His Father and come back until time of the subjection. In 1 Corinthians 15, this occurs at the end of verse v24. The Hebrews passage says that the Second Coming cannot occur until after the subjection of all things, and 1 Corinthians says that when this happens, the Lord will leave His throne and give the Kingdom back to the Father! Quite plainly, the Second Coming cannot happen until after final subjection of all things (v25), and the last enemy to be defeated is death itself (v26)!

But, where is death finally defeated? Revelation 20:14, when it and hades are cast into the lake of fire. This is positively the time of its defeat as well, because that is when it is forced to give up its dead. This is the only time that the defeat of death is mentioned, and it is positively post-millennial.

Putting this together, we see, therefore, that the Second Coming cannot be before the Millennium, because He must reign until all enemies are made subject. Once that happens, He will come back, and give the Kingdom back to the Father.

So, what of the prophecies of a restored, non-backsliding Israel, with a Davidic King reigning from Jerusalem? Well, it's what I like to refer to as the “extra millennium”. Not the millennium of

Revelation 20:1-6, but only a few verses away, between v10 and v11.

After the Gog Magog war, there will be an unknown period of time before the Second Coming. It will be at least seven years, because of Ezekiel 38-39, but it is at that time when God will no longer hide His face from the nation, and pour out His Spirit upon all the people of Israel. So that, all Israel will be saved.

This will not likely be an actual thousand years, but it fills the gap of where most “Millennialists” say these scriptures must be fulfilled. They weren't really that far off in the end, only about four or five verses.

But, clearly, the Second Coming must be viewed as the same as the Great White Throne in Revelation 20. While some might disagree, the Millennium specifically prophesied was fulfilled in the Middle Ages, as is reflected in Foxxe's book of martyrs, which records no martyrs for the span of a thousand years from the time of Constantine to the persecution of John Wickliffe in 1371.

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