

The Millennial Reign of Christ

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[0:00] If you want to open up your Bibles to Revelation chapter 20, I'm going to be preaching what Samir just read, Revelation 20, verses 1 through 10.

But first, I've got to tell you this. There's this restaurant in town that serves an appetizer called sidewalk fries. Now, let me describe them.

Don't leave, though, upon hearing this and go get some. These chunks of fried potatoes smothered in nacho cheese spread and then sprinkled with finely chopped onions in these chunky bacon bits. They're phenomenal. I love that appetizer. Maybe you love appetizers.

If you don't know what an appetizer is, an appetizer is this dish that's served after a guest arrives in a restaurant but before the main course.

[1:12] And so an appetizer kind of takes the edge off your hunger while whetting your appetite for what's to come, the real thing.

So this morning, maybe you've not heard anybody compare the millennial reign of Jesus Christ with an appetizer. But the millennial reign of Christ, the thousand-year reign of Jesus on earth, it takes place after Jesus' arrival, Revelation 19, 11 through 21.

But before the main course, Revelation 21 and 22. The recreations of the heaven and the earth when we will dwell with Christ and all of his people in New Jerusalem.

This morning, I have the privilege of proclaiming the millennial reign of Christ. And like I said, sequentially, it comes after the return of Christ but before the making of the new heavens and the new earth.

Now, next week, Matt Sear is going to get to preach on the great white throne judgment. That's the second half of Revelation chapter 20. But this morning, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, the millennium.

[2:31] When you hear thousand years, a thousand years is a millennium. So I'm going to walk us through Revelation chapter 21 through 10. There are three scenes that I want you to see.

And what it's all designed to do is give you a future glimpse of a coming glory that should put hope in your heart that makes you endure.

It's persevering power. But before I go there, I just need to make a basic observation. And then I want to show you my interpretive hand.

Okay. So here's the basic observation. If you're looking at Revelation chapter 20, that little phrase, 1,000 years, it shows up six times in ten verses.

Now, if you're a student of the Bible, you realize that when a phrase like that shows up as frequently as that in such a short amount of scriptural real estate like that, you realize it's getting your attention.

[3:39] It's emphatic. So let me just point out from the very front of this sermon, I want you to see it. At the end of chapter 20, verse 2, that Satan is bound and thrown into an abyss for a thousand years.

And then at the end of verse 3, he's there. That's the second time a thousand years shows up.

The third time is at the end of verse 4, talking about those who've been raised as part of the first resurrection. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Verse 5, the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. And then at the end of verse 6, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

It's the fifth time. And then the sixth time, verse 7, and when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison. A thousand years shows up six times. Here's what you need to know.

[4:46] This is the only place in your Bible that the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ is referenced. And so what that means is that there are a lot of Bible-believing Christians who've been bought by the blood of Jesus that have different positions on the millennial reign of Jesus.

There's debate how to interpret this thousand-year reign of Jesus. Here are some of the options. There is, remember, a thousand years means a millennium.

So have you ever heard of post-millennialism? I know that's a big word. But the idea behind it is it's a position which Christians believe that there will be this golden age of the gospel going out on earth, and things will be transformed.

And at the end of this millennium, Christ will return. So the post of post-millennium is that Jesus comes back after the millennium, post-millennium.

I'm not a post-millennialist. And then there is the ah-millennialist position. Ah- meaning no or non. And so an ah-millennialist will say, no, there is not a literal 1,000-year reign of Jesus on earth.

[6:00] They will hold that the millennium is more of a symbolic reign that began when Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father and will culminate upon his return.

And so the idea is all millennialists believe that the millennium is actually the church age. We're in the millennium is what they would teach. Now, I am not an ah-millennialist, but I am very sympathetic to ah-millennialists.

I've got ah-millennialist friends, believe it or not. I'm actually pretty sympathetic to that position. And then there is the pan-millennialists.

If you're a Bible scholar, you're saying, I've never read of pan-millennialism. Well, pan-millennialism is it all pans out at the end. It's not really a technical position.

I know that Jesus wins and he rocks. I'm for it. Come, Lord Jesus. I used to be a pan-millennialist. But now I have embraced what's called a pre-millennialist understanding.

[7:13] And what a pre-millennialist is, it's based on a careful study of your Bible, this passage in particular, and your understanding of Revelation as a whole. And that is the conviction that Jesus will return to earth bodily before the millennium.

And he will reign physically on earth for this thousand years. And so what that means is, we are not in the millennium now, but when Jesus returns, Revelation 19, and he wipes out the beast and false prophet in Armageddon, he's going to usher in the millennium when he is reigning on earth.

And following the millennium, we have final judgment and then the new heavens and the new earth and the new Jerusalem. And so it's part of a basic time sequence at the end of the book of Revelation.

Now there's a bunch of other reasons why I'm a pre-millennialist. But why I'm telling you this is this. I'm going to approach Revelation 20, 1 through 10, from a pre-millennial framework.

And so if you want to know more of why I'm a pre-millennialist, I'd be glad to tell you. But I'm going to argue it from the text. And so as we go along here, I think you'll understand why this is a position that is something to embrace.

[8:43] So whether you're a post-millennialist, a-millennialist, pan-millennialist, or pre-millennialist, Jesus is coming back. And it's something to put your heart towards and trust in.

Okay. Preface done. Now let's look at this future glimpse of the thousand-year reign of Jesus on earth. These three scenes from Revelation 21 through 22.

And here are how these three scenes are organized. We get a view immediately before the thousand-year reigns. That verses 1 through 3. We get to see what's going on during the thousand-year reign.

That's 4 through 6. And then in 7 and 10, what happens immediately after the thousand-year reign. And it's all this future glimpse to put hope in your heart, Christian. So let's turn to scene 1, chapter 21 through 22.

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a gray chain. And he seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit and shut it and sealed it, so that he may not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended.

[9:58] After that, he must be released for a little while. So remember, Revelation 20, 1 through 10 follows Revelation 19, 11 through 21, when Christ comes back.

So I'm understanding Revelation 20, 1 through 10, as taking place with Jesus on the earth. So he's already returned. He's already thrown the beast and false prophets, had them seized, thrown into the lake of fire.

And so we wrap up at the end of Revelation 19, the second and third person of the anti-trinity are being tormented in the lake of fire. And you're left asking, well, what about their ringleader? What about the devil?

What's his fate? Chapter 20, verse 1, an angel comes down from heaven, and what you need to notice is what he's holding on to. In his hand is a key to the bottomless pit, the abyss.

We've already encountered that. Chapter 9. It's this hell hole where demonic beasts come out of, bent on destruction. And an angel, in chapter 9, comes down with a key and unlocks the lid to that hell hole, and they go destroy things.

[11:11] The abyss is pictured as a place where demons are locked away and restrained. And there's seemingly only one key. And we have an angel returning with the key.

That hell hole is open, but he's about to close it and lock it. He's also got a chain. And that chain is in his hand.

It's not bling. It is there in his hand because he's going to bind something. To capture something.

This angel is on a dragon hunt. So, what we see happening is, the angel comes down.

He's got this key to the abyss, and he's got this chain. And we're not told about the size of this chain or the composition of this chain, but I'm guessing if you got a close-up look on one of those links of the chain, you would see this written, forged in heaven.

[12:16] Nothing can break the chain. And in chapter 20, verses 2 and 3, we see what this angel comes and does.

Five verbs. He shows up and seizes the dragon. There's this pileup of titles so that you know that there's no doubt of who this angel is angel handling.

The dragon, the ancient serpent, the devil, literally the Satan, the accuser. We were introduced to him back in Revelation chapter 12. This angel comes down and seizes the dragon.

We're not told about like this battle that ensues. I'm just picturing he grabbed him by the scruff of his neck. And then he seizes them, the second verb.

He binds him, bound him for a thousand years. It's the first time that millennium shows up.

Remember, that chain is forged in heaven.

[13:16] There's nothing that can break this chain. And then he takes this dragon, binds him, and then tosses him into the open pit of the abyss.

Throws him down the hole. There's a demonstration here of power of an angel.

Jesus isn't getting his hands dirty here. And then in my mind, the fourth verb is not only the third verb threw him into the abyss. The fourth verb is he shut the lid on the abyss.

I picture he's just kind of like kicked it shut. It's like this mantle cover with hinges. And he's like threw him in, kicked it shut. Kicks it shut, then locks it.

Throws him into the abyss. And then if that's not enough, the fifth verb is he sealed the entrance over the chain-bound dragon. I wonder what that seal read.

[14:24] I'm guessing it read something like this. Not to be opened until the thousand years have ended by order of the one who sits upon the throne in heaven. That's what a seal is.

These five verbs make it very clear that the dragon is angel-handled, thrown into this pit, bound, so that he cannot exert anything of his influence.

It's not a partial restraint. Full restraint. And in 20 verse 3, we're given the reason why Satan is seized, bound, thrown into this, closed and sealed.

We read, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer. For a thousand years, Satan is completely removed from exercising his deceptive influence that opposes Christ and leads the nations away.

And then the very last sentence of verse 3. We read of the second reference to the millennium. After that, he must be released for a little while.

[15:36] Until the thousand years were ended, he's locked up. Satan must be released for a little while. Did you see that word must in the last sentence of verse 3?

That is a divine must. This is God's sovereign plan being worked out. And you might be sitting in your seat saying, well, I don't know about you, but that's not how I would do it.

You're not God. This is his sovereign plan being worked out, and we're given a future glimpse of it to put hope in your heart.

So let me summarize this. After Jesus returns to earth, Satan is seized, bound, thrown into the abyss. The angel kicks the door shut, seals it with a seal for a thousand years, the millennium. He is unable to exert any influence for a thousand years, completely cut off. And why this is here, it is clearing the stage for Jesus' 1,000-year reign on earth.

[16:44] So if 21-3 takes place immediately before Christ's 1,000-year reign, 20 verses 4-6 shows us what is happening during the 1,000-year reign of Christ.

But there's a little bit of a surprise to it. Because you look at verses 4-6, and you're waiting for Jesus, the spotlight to be on Jesus. And what it actually talks about is those of us who are reigning with him.

So what we see here in this second scene, in 20 verse 4, it opens with John seeing thrones. And when you hear throne, your study of the book of Revelation, you know that represents authority. And not only does John see these thrones, he sees people sitting on these thrones. And these people seated on these thrones were given the right to judge.

That's what the text says. God gives them the right to judge. The right to exercise authority. In other words, whoever these people are sitting on these thrones, they're legit.

[17:57] In God's eyes, to taking up a position of authority during the 1,000-year reign of Jesus. So who are these people on the thrones? Well, there's a little controversy in this.

I'm going to give you my best shot at it. But we're told in verse 4, definitely who is, who is at least in part on the thrones. Also, I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God.

We know at a minimum, those on the throne are those martyrs of Christ who have gone to their deaths, proclaiming Jesus and the word of God. Now, that phrase, the testimony of Jesus Christ and the word of God, that shows up in Revelation 1, 9, where John is describing himself as one who's committed to the testimony of Jesus and the word of God.

And he didn't die. He was in prison, but he wasn't martyred. He wasn't beheaded. So that makes me think that those who are on the throne, at least some of them are those who've been beheaded for Jesus.

And what follows next, in the ESV it reads, And those who had not worshipped the beast for its image and had not received the mark on their foreheads or their hands.

[19:19] This could be a reference to those beheaded, the martyrs, or it could be a more general reference to those people who had not bowed the knee to the beast.

And so you can have two groups of people here who are faithful to Christ all the way until the end of their death, whether martyred or not. I tend to think that whether you hold one view or the other throughout the book of Revelation, those martyrs, Revelation 6, 9, who are under the altar crying, How long, O Lord?

Lord, they represent the church. They're a figurehead of sorts. So what I believe is going on here is that those sitting on these multiple thrones are actually the great multitude.

Those who've been faithful to Jesus all the days of their life. Not just those who've been beheaded. All those who'd not bow their knee to the beast.

Its image. They didn't bear the beast's brand of 666. That completely incomplete three-digit number. But no, these are the people that in Revelation 14, 1, have the number of the lamb written on their forehead.

[20:41] These are those who've gone all the way to their deaths, remaining faithful to Jesus, whether martyred or not. So here's the question.

How is it that dead people sit on thrones and reign with Christ? Because in this text that we're reading that they are reigning with Christ.

You can see that, I believe, at the end of chapter, verse 5 and 6. They reigning with Christ. They reigning with Him for a thousand years.

They came to life and reigning with Christ for a thousand years. How is it that dead people sit on thrones and reign? Well, we're told in verse 5, the rest of the dead, excuse me, verse 4, they came to life and they reigning with Christ for a thousand years.

They came to life. There's debate between those who have different positions on the millennium of what this brought to life means, I believe, in this most basic sense, is that they've been raised from the dead.

[22:01] Makes the most sense contextually. And not only were they raised from the dead, they came to life, they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. They were beheaded, they suffered for Christ, and God brought them to life, and they reigned with Jesus, on earth because He's back on earth, Revelation 19.

And at the end of verse 5, John calls this coming to life of all those who are faithful to Christ prior to His coming, as the quote-unquote, the first resurrection. It's referencing a real bodily resurrection of those who had really died faithful to Jesus.

So these thrones are multiple, and those sitting on them are those who've been faithful to Jesus all the days of their life.

For me, the source of great joy and confidence is thinking, I've got a throne waiting for me. To reign with Christ.

That's the highlight. Raised and reigning with Christ. They will reign with Him for a thousand years. All throughout this thousand-year period, whether it's an actual thousand years, or an extended period of time in which that thousand years is mainly kind of a symbolic number, we are with Him for a thousand years, deputized to carry out His thousand-year reign on earth.

[23:37] Now, it really does beg the question, right? Well, what are we going to be doing? Are we going to be, like, taking long walks in the woods? Are we going to just be composing songs? Are we playing kind of, like, redeemed chess all those one thousand years?

What are we doing? Well, this text doesn't really say other than we're going to reign with Him. But here's my best educated guess.

Would you turn back in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 15? And in 1 Corinthians 15, and I preached out of this last week, Paul is talking about the resurrection, and in verse 20, he says this. I'm going to read from 20, verse 20 through 26. And again, here's my best sense of what's going to happen when we're reigning with Jesus during those thousand years. We read this.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order.

[24:43] Christ the firstfruits. Then at His coming, those who belong to Him. Did you see that? When He comes, first resurrection, those who belong to Him.

then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

For He must reign until He's put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to destroy is death. So what are we going to be doing with Jesus for a thousand years?

We are going to be bringing all things under His feet. We are going to be ushering in His reign on earth.

Which is really interesting because remember who's in the hellhole? The devil. We are going to be undoing the chaos He has done. Reversing the mess He's made.

[25:45] We get to do it with Jesus. And we're contested right now. But then, but then, with Jesus, we're going to carry out His reign in very real ways.

We go from being under Satan's foot to him being put in his hellhole and then bringing things under Jesus' feet.

Oh, I'm looking forward to that day. If this is the first resurrection of those who belong to Christ, what you'll see next week when Matt preaches the latter half of chapter 20 is what happens to everybody else.

We see it referred to in verse 5. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. And that is a reference to 11, verse 11 through 15, when the rest of the dead are raised and judged.

We don't need to fear that day because we're part of the first resurrection. So, before the coming of the new heavens and the new earth is the millennial reign of Jesus, but it comes after His return.

[27:19] And those who are sitting on these thrones, they are those who've been faithful to Jesus all their days, especially those who've been given their lives for Christ.

It's a picture of vindication and reward for those who've been faithful to Jesus. Now, don't miss out on the blessing of verse 6. Verse 6 pronounces blessing.

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. Amen. Amen. Yes. This is the fifth of seven blessing pronouncements throughout the book of Revelation.

And so, if you're part of the first resurrection because God has saved you by His grace, you don't need to fear the second death, the lake of fire. You don't need to fear that if you're part of the first resurrection because you're a blood-bought member of God's priesthood of believers who belong to Christ.

You see that in the text? Over such, the second death has no power, but they, those who are sharing the first resurrection, they will be priests of God and of Christ.

[28:26] They will reign as priests for a thousand years doing His bidding. But let me tell you something. What the book of Revelation is pointing to us to, what we will be, we are now.

We are a priesthood of all believers carrying out the will of Jesus on earth. Then it's going to be awesome. Scene one, what happens immediately before the thousand-year reign.

Scene two, what's taking place during the thousand-year reign. I hope your heart rose to that.

Scene three, what immediately happens after the thousand-year reign.

We look at verse seven, this last scene starts with, and when the thousand years are ended, it's the sixth reference to the thousand years, Satan will be released from prison.

And notice, Satan didn't escape. He didn't bust out. He was released. It's purposed. This is all part of God's sovereign plan.

[29:32] And again, you might be saying, well, I'd never do that. You're not God. He's got his purposes. But Satan is released from being bound for 1,000 years.

It's fulfilling what was just said in 20 verse 3. Now, imagine with me. Satan is released from his little hell hole. He's unbound.

What does he see? What do you think happens to the earth after 1,000 years of Jesus reigning on it with those who've been faithful to him on his little deputized thrones?

What do you think he sees? His deceptive and destructive work undone. Fully?

I don't think so. Truly, yes. A reversing of his chaos. Peace being brought under the reign of Christ.

[30:36] And so he gets released. And what does this accuser do? He goes out and deceives the nations. Look at verse 8. After he's released from his prison, he will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle.

Their numbers like the sand of the sea. Upon his release, he goes out and deceives the nations.

That Gog and Magog reference is John wanting to put in the mind of the reader Ezekiel 38 and 39.

And in Ezekiel 38 and 39, it calls to mind to the reader an end-of-time battle between this leader, Gog, and his people, Magog, who are opposed to God and his people and gather against God and his people encamped as if they can do something.

But God swiftly consumes this army with fire. Now, some Christian commentators believe that this is another reference to Armageddon that we read about in Revelation 19, 19-21.

But the time island of Revelation clearly sets that the thousand-year reign comes after Armageddon and before this battle. This isn't Armageddon.

[31:58] This is a one last shot at the throne for Satan because the beast and false prophet are already in the lake of fire. What we see going on here is God setting the stage for complete vindication among the nations.

One of the things that we read about as you go through Ezekiel 38 and 39 that there is this refrain. God's stopping Mag and Magog, Mag and Magog, and all throughout 38 and 39 you have this refrain, that the nations may know that I'm the Lord.

That they may know that I am the Lord. And so what you see happening here is this one great final skirmish in which God puts it down so that there's no question who is in charge.

In verse 9 you read that Satan brings this vast number of human beings alive during the millennial reign that have rebelled against God. He gathers them together and he marches them against God's people, the camp of the saints, which I would argue which is the beloved city of God because there's only two cities in the book of Revelation.

The city of the beast, Babylon, and the city of God, Jerusalem. The end of verse 9, there is this swift defeat of this vast army.

[33:41] Fire comes down from heaven and consumes them all. It's like that anticlimax of Armageddon. There's no hope.

What these vast numbers of people, where they come from, we're not told. I was talking to a brother before the service, like, hey, where do all these people come from in rebellion against God?

I'm like, I don't know. It doesn't say. But it does raise a question I'll come back to in just a second.

What is clear is that all this humanity arrayed against God, deceived by the devil, one last time, they're swiftly consumed in a mighty act of God in which God pours out fire on them, and it's so that the nations will know that I am the Lord.

Vindication! Just no question about it. After Mag and Magog are consumed, Satan's release, which was just for a little while, 20 verse 3, the devil is seized, thrown into the lake of fire where he joins the beast and false prophet to be tormented day and night forever.

It's a picture of hell fueled by the wrath, righteous wrath of God. So remember we asked earlier, we saw the demise of the beast and false prophet at the end of chapter 19.

[35:11] We're asking, hey, what about the ringleader, the first person of the anti-trinity? Here it is. And it's anticlimactic. Throw him in. What we're being shown is the final demise of the anti-trinity, tormented forever in hell, the lake of fire.

And we learn from 21.8 that this is the second death. And if you're a Christian in the room, you don't need to fear the second death because you're part of the first resurrection. Your name's written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

But as Martin Luther said about the devil, his doom is sure. After the 1,000 years, let me just summarize scene three.

Satan is released for a bit. He deceives a vast number of humanity to gather against God's people. But God vindicates himself again and destroys that army and finally forever throws the devil into hell where he will never be released and tormented forever.

Amen. You know what the question I have coming out of this passage is? How is it possible that such a vast swath of humanity at the end of the millennial reign of Jesus would be deceived by Satan?

[36:27] How is that possible? Here's the answer. It goes to show you that mankind's greatest problem is not environmental.

If it's possible that there'll be people living at the end of the millennium, the reign of Christ, who are deceived by the devil, it goes to show you there is a problem within humans that is internal.

It shows the sinfulness of humankind and God's judgment is just. So we've seen what happened before the thousand year reign, the devil's bound and imprisoned.

We've seen what happens during the thousand year reign, those blessed and holy sharing in the first resurrection, reigning on thrones with Christ, bringing all things under his feet.

We've seen what happened after the thousand year reign. Satan is released for a little while again, attempts another coup, God consumes those with him and he gets tossed into the lake of fire.

[37:35] So what's the point? We're being given a future glimpse of a glorious millennial reign of Christ on earth and it's designed to put hope in your heart, a longing, a yes, it's coming.

A time when you yourself, if you're a follower of Jesus, will be raised to life and seated on a throne and participate with Christ during his reign and making all things good.

So this morning, in light of all this, I don't have like, here are seven steps for you to take. Here's what you do now in light of that. No, no. The call isn't to do something.

The call is to believe this. To take these words that you've heard of a future glimpse of a millennial reign of glory and take it to heart, to trust it.

It's persevering power. It puts hope in your heart and when you have hope in your heart, Romans 5, 4 and 5, you are able to press through hard things.

[38:47] And so if you're a Christian in the room and you love the Lamb and you're experiencing hardship with extended family, they're mocking you because you're a follower of Jesus or you're trying to be faithful to Jesus at work and you're catching heat for it, you're not getting promoted or you're being isolated because people just don't want to hear of why you want to work so hard for Jesus.

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. You have no fear of the second death, the lake of fire. Brother, sister, your name is in the Lamb's book of life and so you press on knowing that there's a future glory coming despite hardship.

It's real hope. It really is waiting and we're one day closer. But if you're in the room this morning and you're afraid that when you hear of being a part of the first resurrection and you're like, I'm not sure if I'm going to be a part of that.

And the reason why you don't think you're going to be a part of the first resurrection because you fear God's wrath because you knowingly have rebelled against Him. You know it. You've disobeyed God.

If that's you and you're fearing that thought, oh man, I'm not going to be part of that right now. Perhaps I, the second death awaits me.

[40:21] Well, I've got good news for you. The risen Lamb who is yet to return is your only present hope. He died on the cross to bear God's wrath meant for you, God's wrath for your sin, fell on Christ.

Jesus willingly stepped in front of a burning locomotive of God's wrath for sinners. And the offer of salvation is free to all who would take it.

I was in a conversation with someone a couple months ago and I was explaining this to them and they were having a hard time understanding. They're like, this sounds too good to be true. There's no free lunch.

Who said God's salvation comes at no cost? God's free offer of salvation comes to sinners because Jesus bore the cost of God's wrath on the cross and He's offering it to anyone who would take it today.

So if you're not a believer in the room and you're afraid of the second death, Jesus is your only hope. This morning, I'm not calling you to do something but to believe something, to hear this word of a future glory and take it to heart.

[41:54] It will put strength in your heart. But let me just close with this. This future glimpse of the millennial reign of Christ on earth, it's good.

But remember, it's just a thousand year appetizer. The main course that comes after the millennial reign, after final judgment, the main course, the new heavens and the new earth, the new Jerusalem descends and we are with Jesus in His place, with His people, not for a thousand years but forever.

That's the main course. Let this whet your appetite for that. Let's pray. God, do what You will with Your Word now.

God, would You put strength in people's heart? Would You deliver people from the second death?
God, would You help us to see what You want us to see so that we can live in a way that is worthy
of the Lamb?
In Jesus' name, Amen.