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409 - The Kingdom & 1000 Year Reign

1. Introduction

Misconceptions regarding the nature of Christ's kingdom have been in place since the first century. Christ's disciples failed to grasp the nature of what Christ had come to do until they received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Today there are those who foresee a future time in which Christ will return to the Earth, secure his throne and rule over the nations. But is that what we find in the scriptures?

2. Obstacle of the material mindset

God promised Abraham that the land of Canaan would be given to his descendants. Later, we see the children of Israel return, after 430 years of bondage (Ex 12.41), and forty years in the wilderness, to take hold of the country given to them by the Lord. As Moses prepared the people for his departure and their entry into Canaan, he warned them of a time, when, if they departed from God's laws, they would be taken from the land and scattered among the nations. We see that take place as the nation falls into sin and is punished for their transgression.

A problem for many Bible believers today, as it was for the Jews of the first century, is the status of the kingdom of Israel. In the prophets we see statements promising the restoration of a kingdom, one that will endure, ruled by the Messiah. In the first century the Jews, including Jesus own disciples, expected Christ to restore the kingdom as it had been at the time of David.

Such interpretations focus on the physical nature of Israel and particularly the period of David's rule. David, the man after God's own heart, and second king of Israel, was promised that his throne would be established forever, and as of today, that hasn't happened. Physically. Concentration on material aspects of God's promise to Abraham, the children of Israel and elements of the Law of Moses, creates obstacles to understanding the nature of Christ's kingdom, the reign of the Messiah and their relationship to physical Israel.

In this lesson I'll discuss

- a. The land that was promised
- b. A kingdom lost
- c. The vacated throne
- d. The new kingdom
- e. The thousand year reign

Let's take a look at each of these.

3. The land that was promised

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Ideas about a future kingdom revolve around the belief that the land promised to Abraham wasn't fulfilled. In modern times that's led to concentrated efforts to establish and preserve Israel as part of God's overall plan. Since the time of Christ there has been war and conflict in Palestine. In A.D. 70 the nation of Israel was destroyed, the Jewish religion made illegal and the population was scattered by the Romans. In the middle ages crusades were fought to protect and preserve the Holy Land in order to secure the area for a future restoration. Modern Israel is viewed as a component of God's plan to send Christ back to the Earth and reestablish the kingdom of David where he will rule over the nations.

If those ideas are true, and that's what we're going to discuss in this lesson, then we believe in a God who hasn't made good on a promise issued thousands of years ago, who failed to achieve his ultimate goal when his son was sent into the world, and, who's dependent on the cooperation and assistance of humanity to accomplish his will. I don't believe any of that is true. I also believe there's ample evidence in the scriptures that God has delivered on all his promises and succeeded in every endeavor in spite of humans and Satan.

The promise made to Abraham is one that is easily answered. Did the Lord fulfill his promise to the patriarch? Yes he did. Let's take a look at that promise in detail and then we'll take a look at the fulfillment recorded in the scriptures.

God promised Abraham three things. He would have a son, his descendants would be given the land the Lord would show him and through him all families of the Earth would be blessed (**Gen 12.1-3, Gen 15.1-16**). As God repeated this promise to Abraham he not only assured the patriarch his descendants would receive the land, he detailed the extent of that possession.

“In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”
(Gen 15.18-21).

From this point on in the narrative we can follow Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We read of Joseph's time in Egypt and how the family was preserved. Bondage is imposed on the Hebrews for 430 years (**Ex 12.41**) and we follow them to Sinai, walk with them through the wilderness and the conquest of Canaan. As the book of Judges comes to an end we see the country in a state of spiritual and social anarchy (**Judg 21.25**). The inhabitants that were to be driven out still remained in some areas and the land is not fully occupied. Judges are raised up by God to deliver the people from oppression for a period of 450 years (**Acts 13.20**) and we see the rejection of the last judge, Samuel, as the people demand a king so they can be like the nations

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around them (**1 Sam 8.5**). Saul becomes the first king of Israel, sins, is rejected by God and succeeded by David. David's life becomes tumultuous due to his transgression against God but is preserved by the Lord. His son Solomon succeeds him, becomes idolatrous and is told ten tribes would be taken from the house of David. This comes to pass in the reign of his son Rehoboam, whose policies are so oppressive, that ten tribes reject the house of David and rebel led by Jereboam the Ephraimite. The family of David continues on the throne until the time of the Babylonian invasions and eventual exile at which time the line of kings is no longer identifiable on the throne.

In the midst of all that history, we wonder, when did the nation receive the fulfillment of the land promised made to Abraham. The general consensus is that this was never received, and now, in the twenty-first century expectations grow looking for the promise to be realized. But it's going to be a long wait because the promise was fulfilled.

During David's reign, Canaanite tribes continued to inhabit areas of the country. Jerusalem remained a Jebusite stronghold until it was taken by David's general Joab (**1 Chron 11.4-7**). When David died, passing the nation on to his son Solomon, complete occupation of the land hadn't been accomplished.

Solomon's reign was more peaceful than David's. Blessed by God with wisdom, riches and the ability to lead God's people, he undertook a number of construction projects, the most famous of which was the Temple (**1 Kng 8**), and expanded the borders of Israel. Here we find a detail critical to our discussion.

“And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.” (**1 Kng 4.21**). A similar note is recorded in 2 Chronicles. *“And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.”* (**2 Chron 9.26**).

The geographic area specified in these statements extended from *“the river”* referring to the Euphrates, to the border of Egypt, marked by the River of Egypt. Comparing that to God's promise to Abraham we read earlier, it's clear that the land promise was fulfilled during the reign of Solomon. The problem we run into is that many are unaware of the conditions for continued possession of the land clarified by Moses in his final address to the children of Israel recorded in the book of Deuteronomy.

4. A kingdom lost

The final chapters of Deuteronomy record prophetic statements concerning

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consequences that would be imposed on the children of Israel if they rejected God and his Law. Moses not only outlines a progression of judgments, he provides detail about the state of the nation in general, and how they'll be treated by other nations. There's a detail that we need to cover first that's at the heart of the confusion regarding the land.

As God brought Abraham into the land of Canaan he stated, "***And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.***" (Gen 13.15). Ok, so Canaan, modern day Palestine, was given to the Hebrews, modern Jews, and it's theirs. God said it. It's a promise, and so no one else should have it or be able to take it away. It's a gift from God. On the surface that sounds reasonable. And it would be, if God never added any other details or conditions. But there are conditions and outcomes.

The Law of Moses was more than a set of rules to be followed issued by a powerful deity. It contained a statement of things that were acceptable to God, and included blessings that would be sustained for faithfulness. It was a covenant, a contract, an agreement. God had supplied them with freedom, guidance, a nation and the promise of perpetuating these blessings, if they remembered his laws and followed them. And there was a warning.

In his final address to the children of Israel, Moses reminded them of the goodness of God and how they had been blessed, not because of their righteousness (Deut 9.5), but because of the righteousness of God that remembered the promise he made to Abraham. As they were about to enter Canaan and begin the process of claiming it, Moses issued several warnings. One of them appears early in the discourse. "***And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.***" (Deut 8.19-20).

God had provided for them and promised to continue his blessings on their nation. Their part was to remain faithful to the Lord and return his goodness with service. The latter part of the book contains a listing of blessing and curses that were to be read at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerezim. Outlined in these are the benefits of remembering God and remaining faithful as well as consequences for transgression.

Should they forget God, break his covenant, or law, they would suffer the consequences for that. Moses states, "***But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you,***

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that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.” (Deut 30.17-20).

These warnings are prophetic in nature as Moses reveals that there will be a time when they have a king over them who will be subject to the same judgments. **“The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.” (Deut 28.36).** This was fulfilled as Israel and Judah forgot the Law and God. The Northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. without a promise of restoration physically.

In the South, Judah saw brief revivals of service to God during the reigns of such kings as Hezekiah and Josiah. The trend however was toward idolatry and corruption for which they were overcome by the Babylonians. Jeremiah spoke of this and provided specific detail about the future of the nation. He writes, **“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jer 25.11).** Later Jeremiah repeats this stating, **“For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.” (Jer 29.10).**

Moses told the children of Israel what God would do to them if they violated his law and forgot him. As that took place, God sent prophets and other messengers to call them back and repent, but they refused to do so. Finally, when there was no more remedy (**2 Chron 36.16**) God allowed the Babylonians to take them captive and finally destroy the kingdom in 586 B.C.

The children of Israel had broken the covenant (**Jer 11.10**). In breaking this covenant, God withdrew his blessings from them, allowed them to be overtaken and exiled from their land. But, God promised that a remnant would return. God had a plan for the nation. That plan was to bring the Messiah into the world for their sake and that of the rest of the world. When that took place the Law of Moses, that which had been broken by them, would be replaced by a new law (**Jer 31.31-32**). We find that the remnant returned just as promised by Isaiah (**Isa 10.21-22**) which is recorded in the books of **Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai** and **Zechariah**.

Daniel, who was taken to Babylon in 606 B.C., understood the prophecy of Jeremiah and had been keeping track of the years. **“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” (Dan 9.1-2).** The time had come for the return which took place as

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recorded by Ezra and Nehemiah. The Temple was rebuilt and the walls repaired but there was a change that accompanied the return. Judea, as it came to be known, would have a governor, but the throne had been vacated, and would remain empty.

The Premillennial interpretation of events in the scriptures revolves around the idea that the land promise hasn't been fulfilled. We've now proven that to be incorrect. The teaching also contends that Israel hasn't been restored and so must be re-established to fulfill prophecy. The return of the remnant, beginning in 536 B.C. demonstrates that this idea is incorrect as well. Now how about the kingship?

5. The vacated throne

Israel wanted to be like the nations around them when they asked for a king (**1 Sam 8.5**). As time went on they achieved what they wanted. They became like the other nations and that included their king. The Southern kingdom of Judah was ruled by descendants of David until the time of the Babylonian destruction in 586 B.C. When the remnant returned, they didn't have a king - they had a governor. The earliest of these was Zerubabel who's listed as a descendant of David in the genealogy of Christ (**Lk 3.27**). The Jews of the first century waited for the Messiah. Their hope for their future rested firmly in the belief that the Messiah would restore the kingdom, drive out their enemies and sit on David's throne. The prophet Jeremiah clearly stated that this wasn't going to happen.

Jehoiachin, also known as Jeconiah, and referred to as Coniah by the prophet Jeremiah, was taken into Babylon as a captive. We don't have a lot of detail about his actions while acting as king but he was summarized as doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. In addressing the growing spiritual rebellion and corruption in the nation Jeremiah writes about this king and the future of the nation.

Because of the evil they had done, Jeremiah, recording God's decree, states they would be taken from the land and would not return (**Jer 22.27**). Specifically, of Jeconiah, referred to as Coniah, Jeremiah writes, ***"Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."*** (**Jer 22.28-30**).

This prophecy effectively eliminates an earthly king of David's line sitting on a physical throne ruling in Jerusalem. The nation established and blessed by God had sinned, reaped the consequences for their actions and were punished by being exiled from their land. A remnant would return after seventy years to complete the work of God in bringing the Messiah into the world. Once they returned, the nation was back in their land, but their law was dying and would

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pass away. The monarchy of David and his descendants was not to be reestablished physically. So how would God fulfill his promise to David when he told him he would establish his throne forever? That can only be answered by examining the nature of the new kingdom that would be established by the Messiah as the prophets also foretold.

6. The new kingdom

Isaiah prophesied of the coming kingdom and describes its nature. He writes, “***And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.***” (Isa 2.2). Micah makes a similar prophecy as well (Mic 4.1-2). One difference between the two is that Isaiah states “***all nations shall flow unto it***” while Micah writes that “***people shall flow unto it***”. The wording may vary slightly, but the overall meaning is the same. Isaiah specifically addressed the future of Judah and Jerusalem in this prophesy.

To clarify that this prophecy refers to a coming kingdom, it speaks of the law that would manifest as well. Micah writes, “***for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.***” (Mic 4.2). Moving forward in time, we find that Christ, prior to his ascension, instructed his disciples “***that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.***” (Acts 1.4). Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit falls on the apostles and they preach the remission of sins in the name of Christ for the first time. So how do we understand this to be the day that Christ’s kingdom is established?

One thing that might be confusing is Christ’s answer to Pilate when asked about his status as a king and what he’d done. Christ replied, “***My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.***” (John 18.36). Pilate appears to be confused and follows up with a question. “***Art thou a king then?***” (John 18.37). Christ responded, “***Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.***” (John 18.37).

Christ’s response to Pilate doesn’t deny his future position in the new kingdom. In this exchange, Christ let’s Pilate know that he’s a king, that he was born to do exactly what was happening regarding his imminent death and he skillfully neutralized any possible threat to Rome or the Jews by stating that it was not of this world. That aspect of the coming kingdom would have been enough to erase any fear of insurrection or rebellion. The approaching kingdom was spiritual, not physical, and would be populated by those hearing the voice of the savior through his word.

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How do we know that the kingdom and the church are the same thing? Some believe Christ was killed before he could complete his task. As a temporary measure, the church was established until the time of the end when Christ, the seed of David, would return and assume the throne in Jerusalem. We'll take a look at what the New Testament has to say about the church as the kingdom, then we'll take a look at some difficulties created by the idea that the church isn't the kingdom.

The first definitive statement about this can be found in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost. Peter, speaking of David's prophecy and recent events surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ states, ***"Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."*** (Acts 2.32-36).

Peter makes it clear to those listening that God had raised Christ from the dead. This was fulfillment of David's prophecy and ends this declaration with the revelation that Jesus was both Lord and Christ. Those titles identify Jesus as the Messiah and being Lord occupied the throne of David, used as a figure, for the throne Christ occupies in Heaven at his father's side.

The writer of Hebrews also bears out that Christ is reigning and does so by the decree of God. ***"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."*** (Heb 1.8).

As Paul addresses the Colossians he refers to the kingdom and it's ruler. Paul writes, ***"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son..."*** (Col 1.12-13). The meaning of the passage is simple. The kingdom was the church. The Colossians were part of it, and had been since their sins were taken away by God. At that moment they were ***"translated"*** into the kingdom of ***"his dear son."*** The church wasn't a stopgap to fill a void when the kingdom couldn't be established. Christ's death, burial and resurrection, paid the price for sin, and obedience made one a citizen in this new kingdom.

Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to, ***"walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory."*** (1 Thess 2.12). Paul continued to preach the kingdom in Rome (Acts

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28.23,31). The kingdom was preached to the Samaritans by Philip (**Acts 8.12**). And in Corinth Paul spoke to them concerning the kingdom (**Acts 19.8**).

The spiritual nature of the kingdom is spoken of in **Romans 14.17**, **1 Corinthians 4.20**, **1 Corinthians 15.50** and **2 Thessalonians 1.5**. There are other passages that speak of these attributes but the facts are clear. The church is the spiritual kingdom Christ stated he would build (**Matt 16.18**). Christ is the head of that kingdom sitting on the throne as we reviewed. Although the church is a spiritual kingdom, it has a physical presence in the world, but is not of the world in thought, action or doctrine. It's also the kingdom, the church, made up of saved believers, that will be presented to God at the last day when Christ returns as Paul describes (**1 Cor 15.24**).

Christ didn't fail in his mission to fulfill the will of God. The eternal kingdom, spiritual Israel, was established on the day of Pentecost, and is in the world today. Members of that kingdom, are not of this world, as we set our sight on things beyond this time. To think that God's son came into the world and somehow fell short of finishing the task for which he was sent undermines God's power, wisdom and engineering. If the church isn't the kingdom, and Christ failed, then every prophecy of the kingdom is misleading and false. God is a failure whose plans depended on the actions of humans and we're not truly prepared for eternity.

The idea that Christ will return and occupy a physical throne violates Jeremiah's statement that no one of the seed of David would prosper any more sitting on the throne in Jerusalem. Jeremiah's statement and God's declaration, effectively obliterates a future possible physical reign of Christ in Jerusalem. Since that's clear we either accept the scriptures word for it or we live with a contradiction in our beliefs that we can't explain.

7. The thousand year reign

Revelation is a difficult book to understand due to the nature of the information presented. Approaching the letter we need to remember the principles I've stressed throughout this series. Things must be kept in context. In regard to the book of Revelation, we have the immediate context of the book that sets limits and defines the scope of application in the writing. As with other books in the Bible we also have to keep Revelation in the context of the entire narrative. If things are presented in the book of Revelation that create contradictions with the rest of the scriptures then we have to resolve our misunderstanding in a way that preserves the context and meaning of all of the inspired word.

Having said that we have a description of the reign of Christ that is assumed to be established on Earth in Jerusalem. John writes, "***And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the 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***

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his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand 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 thousand years.” (Rev 20.4-6).

There’s a lot packed into this passage but the basic elements need to be understood in light of the context of the book. The first thing to note is that this book is conveyed in signs and symbols. Throughout the letter there are multiple numbers used to represent things that have spiritual meaning. These signs and symbols aren’t literal and when they’re interpreted as literal values we have problems. There are several things that stand out when considering a literal thousand year reign of Christ on Earth.

Of significance is the fact that although this passage is used to show that Christ will assume the throne of David in Jerusalem for 1000 years, there’s no mention of Jerusalem in this reference. Secondly, the opening of the passage indicates multiple thrones, and those who sat on the thrones live and reign with Christ for that period of time. If taken literally, Christ is demoted from Lord of Lord and King of Kings (**Rev 17.14, Rev 19.16**) and the faithful dead in the passage are elevated to an equal place with Christ. Nowhere in the scriptures can we find a parallel to this. Christ is the head of the church (**Eph 5.23, Col 1.18**), the Alpha and Omega (**Rev 1.8,11, Rev 21.6, Rev 22.13**) and the author and finisher of our faith (**Heb 12.2**). No one is equal to, or above him, with the exception of God the Father (**1 Cor 15.27**).

Another problem with a literal interpretation is the following statement recorded by John. *“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan 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.” (Rev 20.7-8).* The battle of Armageddon, according to Permillennial thought, precedes the thousand year reign. That engagement saw the destruction of Satan’s power and that of his minions. If that’s the case then a literal interpretation will have to assume that the battle of Armageddon was an incomplete victory by Christ, Satan was temporarily thwarted and contained but is able to become free and once again deceive the nations.

The entire idea of this interpretation presents God and Christ as failing multiple times. Christ, and therefore God, failed to establish a kingdom when Christ came into the world and now even after a thousand year respite from evil, Satan is able to resume his activities as before. Another problem created by this idea is that Satan has the ability to free himself from a limitation or imprisonment imposed by God and therefore displays power equivalent to what God and Christ have. That isn’t something apparent anywhere in the scriptures. Even humans who resist Satan will cause him to depart (**Jas 4.7**). If humans have that ability, how much greater is God’s power over the Devil? The literal interpretation assuming an earthly reign by

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Christ poses massive contradictions not only with the other scriptures but it also creates problems within the book of Revelation itself. John's writing is therefore self-contradictory if there's a reign by Christ in Jerusalem for any length of time!

So, what does all that mean? Placing these statements back into the context of the book as non-literal signs and symbols that are bound temporally by the phrase "*must shortly come to pass*" we see something entirely different. What emerges is the victorious nature of Christ, and the saints who are faithful, over Satan and his influence in the world. Figures used here all point to the fact that no matter what Satan attempts, or how he goes about it, God and Christ are in control and will remain there. The symbol of 1000 appears figuratively in other places in the scriptures in passages such as **Psalm 50.10**, **Psalm 90.4** and **2 Peter 3.8** and is used figuratively here as well.

8. Conclusions

- a. The passage denoting the 1000 year reign doesn't mention Jerusalem or the Earth
- b. Christ, a descendant of David (and Coniah) can't occupy a physical throne
- c. God stated that a king would not prosper any more sitting on the throne in Jerusalem
- d. After his resurrection and ascension, Christ took his place with God
- e. Christ's dominion over the kingdom, the church, is eternal
- f. Literal interpretations of Revelation create discrepancies within the book & the Bible
- g. Christ is the only king or head over the kingdom
- h. The kingdom is the church
- i. The church was established on the Day of Pentecost
- j. Christ's reign is eternal and therefore will never end
- k. Revelation is a non-literal book rendered in signs and symbols
- l. The context of Revelation limits itself to a period described as "shortly"

Putting all these things together, we know that the book of Revelation was written to congregations that needed encouragement and correction. They were at the heart of a coming apostasy and needed to focus on faithfulness. The fulfillment of the things written in the book deal largely with the judgment of God against the oppressing power, which was identified as Rome. Christ is currently reigning on his throne over his kingdom, the church, as this is being written. His domain and reign will never end. Christians today are subjects of that kingdom and don't need to fear the things happening in the world.

9. Next

Ideas about the End Times culminate in the eventual regeneration of the physical world essentially resetting creation to a pristine condition that God intended in the beginning. For that reason the End Times represent the future revelation of **The New Heaven & New Earth**. In the

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next lesson we'll discuss this idea in light of what the scriptures teach.