One Nation Under God – The 2nd Coming & Millennium (Rev. 19:1-20:10)

**Introduction:** “War, what is it good for?” That’s the question Edwin Starr and Motown Records put to the American public in 1970 at the height of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

[play video of “War” by Edwin Starr]

I don’t believe that any sane person enjoys war (unless you’re talking about chess, the card game “war,” or video games). War is never a good thing, but there are times when it is a necessary thing.

At the end of the Tribulation, after Satan through the Antichrist has ruled the world for seven years, Jesus will return to set up His Kingdom. The day about which His disciples asked Him as He was getting ready to rise into the clouds has finally arrived.

*“So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"* (Acts 1:6)

Satan is not going to just surrender the keys to the Kingdom. Jesus will work through a series of steps to firmly establish Himself as the King and show His right to rule the Kingdom.

1. **Step #1 – Celebrate your victory. Jesus will celebrate with His Bride** (Rev. 19:1-10).

Any combatant knows the danger of celebrating victory too early. It can cause you to become over-confident. When an enemy king, Ben-hadad, besieged Samaria and confidently proclaimed his victory, Ahab, the king of Israel said, “Let not him who girds on his armor boast like him who takes it off” (1 Kings 20:11). Ahab then defeated Ben-hadad’s superior forces. God’s intervention and Ben-hadad’s cockiness led to his defeat. The same thing happened to Samson (1 Sam. 17).

Though premature celebration can be detrimental to success, encouraging your team is essential for it. Whether it’s a sporting event or a military mission, the wise leader will work to help his team envision themselves being victorious. It’s easy to claim victory when you have a undefeatable player on your team. The reason both Ahab and David were able to win was they had God on their side. So do we.

When Jesus returns from heaven, He is coming as the victorious Warrior. That’s because He has already defeated the enemy’s only weapons – temptation (Matt. 4) and death (1 Cor. 15:54-56). He can claim victory because He has already won!

We come back with Him, but we don’t join in the battle. It’s as if Jesus says to His Bride, “Stand back honey, and just watch while I flex my muscles.” What bride doesn’t swoon and fall more deeply in love with her Groom as she watches Him put Himself in danger to protect her? There will be no danger for Jesus, but there will be for His enemies.

1. **Step #2 – Secure your enemies. Jesus will defeat those who oppose Him** (Rev. 19:11-20:3).
2. Physical enemies – *“the kings of the earth…were killed with the sword”* (Rev. 19:19-21)

Jesus’ enemies exist in two realms – the physical world and the spiritual world. The first group to experience His fury is physical. In Bowl Judgment number 6, the Euphrates River evaporates, paving a road for the kings of the East to approach Israel. Three demonic spirits aided by the Antichrist (Rev. 19:19) prompt Earth’s rulers and rebels to confront the approaching King (Rev. 16:12-16). Immediately, Jesus captures the Antichrist and the false prophet – the ones leading this revolt – and casts both of them into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20). They become the first two inhabitants of that tragic place.

Jesus then directs His attention to the rest of the combatants. The battle – if you can call it that – is over quickly. Everyone who has rejected Jesus’ mercy and grace dies. Disease doesn’t kill them, nor does fire, or falling projectiles. They die by the sword originating from Jesus’ mouth. These are the ones who inflicted harm on His people. They chose to live by the sword, and they will die by it (Matt. 26:52).

Jesus is angry and rightly so. But it’s a sad anger. Jesus wanted to redeem these people not destroy them.

*“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die…?”* (Ezek. 33:11)

John describes Jesus wearing a kingly robe dipped in blood (Rev. 19:13). The robe is bloodied before the battle begins. That’s because the real war was fought thousands of years earlier on a cross not far from where this battle will occur. There Jesus shed *His* blood in the hope that He would not have to shed *our* blood. He does not want to kill the humans he loves, but He will. And He will use the sword coming out of His mouth (Rev. 1:16).

The Bible identifies the substance of this sword. It is Jesus’ words (Eph. 6:17). Jesus’ words are *powerful*! Jesus used words to create the world (Gen. 1; John 1:1-2), and to create new life in us (Rom. 1:16). Jesus’ words can reach down into the depth of who we are. They can be a sharp scalpel to eradicate cancerous sin (Heb. 4:12), or a sword to discipline and ultimately destroy (Rev. 2:16). He yearns to use His words to express love. If you refuse to listen, He will use His words to execute judgment (Rev. 2:11). The ones who die at Jesus’ words will do so because they listened to the deceptive words of Jesus’ spiritual enemies.

1. Spiritual enemies – *“he laid hold of the dragon…and threw him into the abyss”* (Rev. 20:2-3)

Jesus’ self-declared enemy is Satan. They have been warring for millennia. These verses use graphic terminology to describe Jesus’ enemy. “Dragon” – danger. “Serpent” – subtlety, deception. “Devil” – adversary, the enemy. “Satan” – accuser. The only reason anyone would follow him is they do not know his true nature! Satan presents himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). When Jesus, the true Light arrives, all the shadows will disappear. The deception will be subject to the Light, and Jesus will reveal Satan’s darkness. Satan thinks he is powerful, but when the time is right, Jesus will remove Satan from his throne. Jesus will then establish Himself and His followers as the new ruling force.

1. **Step #3 – Establish your leadership team. Jesus will invite His brothers and sisters to rule with Him** (Rev. 20:4-6).

One of the first tasks after a regime change is to choose those who will serve in the new administration. You know your evaluation as a leader will be based partially on the excellence of your team. So you must choose well. And you must do what you can to ensure their loyalty, confidence, and endurance during your administration.

1. Give them authority – *“judgment was given to them” (v. 4)*

Jesus does not need any help to rule His kingdom. But He chooses to disburse some of His authority into the hands of His children. God did that in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. He told them to “subdue it and rule” (Gen. 1:28-29), to “cultivate it and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). But why? Why give humanity this responsibility when God could do it Himself? God made man in His image. Man needs to be active, making a contribution and expressing his creativity. This role will continue into the Millennial Kingdom.

At the beginning of Jesus’ reign, there won’t be anyone to rule but Christians. Just as the Antichrist began his rule with only those who had rejected Christ, so Jesus will begin His rule with only those who have rejected Satan. His whole administration will be composed solely of one political party. Faith and politics will be inexorably mixed. Imagine how much and how quickly Jesus can get things done with no opposition! Conditions in the Kingdom will be similar to conditions in the Garden. Ruling the Kingdom, at first, will be effortless because of the nature of the Kingdom’s citizens.

The citizenry of this kingdom is composed of two classes of people. One group of people returns to earth from heaven. Either death or the rapture took them there. At the rapture, they gained a new, restored body that can’t feel pain, can’t decay and can’t die. Jesus alters their internal nature too making it completely like His. They love like Jesus. The things that bring joy to Jesus bring joy to them. They have an eternal perspective now. They can’t sin. They are glorified, supernatural.

The other group of people inhabiting the Kingdom is still in their original physical bodies. They are the survivors of the Tribulation, gathered by Jesus’ angels at His return to earth (Matt. 24:31). They can still feel pain, can still decay and will still die. They are Christians, but like Christians today, they will still be able to sin. They are natural.

There’s one more major difference between the two groups. The Christians in their natural bodies can produce children. Those in their glorified bodies cannot (Matt. 22:30).

The children of the Tribulation survivors and their successive generations will still possess a sin nature. Like the generations before them, they will have to decide for themselves whether or not to follow Jesus. There will be no automatic salvation. Missionaries will travel the world to take the Gospel to people who have not heard of God’s glory (Isaiah 66:19). These descendants of Tribulation survivors will mature in a perfect environment with a perfect leader, but they will not be perfect.

Since the Christians who survived the Tribulation and their successive generations will still have a sin nature, they will need a government over them to curtail their natural tendencies. This government will be different than any in human history. Can you imagine a government that is speedy, efficient, holy, honest, responsive, kind, and cooperative? I know. It boggles the mind just thinking about the possibilities! The reason this government will possess these characteristics is because its King and all His representatives do.

1. Choose them wisely – *“beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus” (v. 4)*

Jesus doesn’t reward these believers with positions of authority because of their skill but because of their character. Character will finally be the criterion for leadership. Power won’t alter them. Offers of money will be impotent to corrupt them. How do I know? They refused the mark of the Beast. They could have had power. They refused it. They could have had money and the necessities of life money buys. But they considered the treasures Jesus provides to be of far greater value. They are reminiscent of other heroes of the faith.

*“Others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy ), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.”* (Heb. 11:35-38)

The crucible grows, tests, and manifests character. During the harshest attack from the enemy, the Tribulation, these refused to renounce Jesus even though it cost them their lives. They will have given evidence of their dying loyalty to Jesus Christ.

*“And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”* (Rev. 12:11)

Loyalty is easy when rewards are high, and risks are low. The ones Jesus chooses to reign with Him were loyal when it cost them everything and when it appeared Jesus was losing. Wise choice. It’s time now for Jesus to reward them.

1. Reward them handsomely – *“reign with Him for a thousand years” (v. 5)*

People persist in the difficult times because they believe in the cause and because they believe in the promise of reward. Paul spoke of the hardships he endured for the cause of Christ – “afflicted,” “perplexed,” “persecuted,” “delivered over to death” (2 Cor. 4:8-10). At the end of his list, he uses the terms “light” and “momentary” to express his perspective on his troubles. It’s not that Paul’s enemies were anemic in their infliction of pain or that what he went through was short-lived. The reason Paul could use this terminology and maintain this attitude is because he saw his struggles in light of his reward – “eternal,” “weighty,” and “far beyond comparison” (2 Cor. 4:17). That perspective establishes him as a member of an elite faith group.

*“By faith [Abraham] lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”* (Heb. 11:9-10)

*“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”* (Heb. 11:24-25)

*“Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (Heb. 12:2)

What are 40-70 years of pain and struggles compared to 1000 years of ruling and reigning? What are 1000 years compared to eternity? Moses cautions us that 70 years of indulgence are not worth an eternity of separation from God and suffering in Hell.

1. Protect them completely – *“over these the second death has no power” (v. 6)*

It is Hell and the Lake of Fire that Jesus protects His followers from. Jesus doesn’t use people to get to a place of authority and then dispose of them when He no longer needs them. Satan does. During the Tribulation, the Dragon (Satan) and the Beast (Antichrist) will use the one-world religion and its leaders to establish their control over people and martyr the Christian opposition (Rev. 17:6). As soon as they accomplish their goal, they jettison the religion they detest (Rev. 17:16-17). Jesus doesn’t do that with His followers!

Nor does Jesus abandon His followers when they become a liability. Think about it. You’ve *always* been a liability for Jesus! So have I. Frederick Nietzsche, the father of Nihilism (meaninglessness) and the “God is dead” movement said, “I might believe in the Redeemer if his followers looked more redeemed.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

The Father publicly expressed His pride in Jesus (Matt. 3:17). But surely, the Father and Jesus must be ashamed of Christians. Not so. For those who possess enough faith to look beyond the potential rewards of their immediate circumstances and sacrifice those rewards in favor of the future God offers, the Bible says these amazing words:

*“God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”* (Heb. 11:16)

He loves you! Why would He discard you? He paid the highest price possible price to redeem you!

*“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”* (Rom. 8:32)

He values you! Whatever you value, you protect. God does the same. You don’t have to worry about Him rejecting you now or in the future. He will protect you and provide for you. He promised.

1. **Step #4 – Prove yourself to your subjects. Jesus will provide for His people** (Rev. 20:6).

Satan has been earth’s *de facto* ruler ever since Adam and Eve submitted to his authority in the Garden. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul refers to him as the “prince of the power of the air.” Later in the same book, he says our battle is of a spiritual nature against “rulers,” “powers,” and “spiritual wickedness” in “heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). Satan has had thousands of years to prove his legitimacy as a capable ruler who provides for his followers. During the Tribulation, at least for a time, God’s interference in his plans will be absent. Even with the number of human and demonic followers he possesses, he will not be able to achieve his goals or provide promised resources. The Millennial Kingdom will be Jesus’ opportunity to show what life is like under His rule without Satan’s interference.

1. Jesus’ kingdom will be a time of restoration (Ezek. 39:7-16).

Jesus’ new leadership team will have the arduous task of straightening out the fiasco handed to them by the previous administration. There will be much that needs straightening.

Imagine the scene. The planet is in shambles due to thousands of years of human mismanagement, seven years of evil rule by the Antichrist, and four series of judgments sent by God during the Tribulation. The water and air are polluted seemingly beyond repair. Breathing requires great effort. It’s cold. The light of the sun can barely make it through the dense layers of ash and dust caused by volcanic eruption, celestial impact, and nuclear blasts. Decaying bodies litter the landscape. The world stinks. Fire has incinerated all the vegetation. The ground is irradiated, so even if you could get anything to grow, it would be deadly. It is a truly apocalyptic scene.

This is the kingdom Jesus inherits. *Good luck!* Most rulers would already be writing the speech explaining why their tenure was unsuccessful. They simply were handed too much of a mess to be able to accomplish anything of significance. But this is Jesus. His level of experience taking impossible situations and bringing hope to them is rich! He was dead! Since this *is* Jesus, He could simply speak the word and restore the world to its original glory. He will not.

He will task His followers with the decontamination and reconstruction of His Kingdom. For the first seven months of the new Kingdom, people will scour Israel searching for dead and decaying bodies (Ezek. 39:12). A follow-up team will locate any remaining contamination and place a flag there so that recovery teams can gather them and bury them (Ezek. 39:14-15). The purpose is not to honor the fallen dead, but to cleanse the land of their bodies. The survivors will fuel their houses for seven years by burning the useless discarded weapons of their enemies (Ezek. 39:9-10).

It’s not fun cleaning up someone else’s mess. What parent or teacher, when asking a child to clean hasn’t heard these words: “But I didn’t make the mess!” So why doesn’t Jesus just work a miracle to sanitize and beautify everything immediately? It’s the same reason Jesus had the servants work to fill the water pots at His first miracle (John 2) and had the blind man wash in the pool of Siloam before he received his sight (John 9:7-11). We tend to devalue those items handed to us without cost.

Which car does the teen value more? The expensive one daddy bought for him or the junky one he had to earn through his hard work? Which one will he take better care of? We ravaged God’s first Creation – the one He gave to us. We have to work for this one. It will be humanity’s chance to show we have changed.

We also tend to forget those events that happen too quickly. God took most of the night to prepare the pathway for Israel across the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21). He wanted to burn that image into their minds so that they would never forget how God had rescued them. It worked. For generations, the Israelites referenced the Red Sea as evidence of God’s protection and provision (Acts 7:36). Making His followers cleanse the world they will live in over an extended period will cause them to value and protect it.

Not only will God restore His original work, but He will restore respect for His name.

*“My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.”* (Ezek. 39:7)

During the Tribulation, God allowed the Antichrist (Rev. 13:5) and the Great Prostitute (Rev. 17:3) to blaspheme His name. The people joined the thunderous chorus (Rev. 16:11, 21). *No more*. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess the worthiness of Jesus’ name (Phil. 2:9-11).

1. Jesus’ kingdom will be a time of resurrection (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezek. 47:7-12).

I’ve already described what the planet will look like after the Tribulation. It looks dead. If you’ve ever seen the landscape after a forest fire or even after a volcanic eruption (Mt. St. Helens), you have experienced doubt about the potential for recovery. But God is life (John 14:6), and this is His world. Ezekiel speaks of a beautiful, luscious world rising out of the ashes. Easily accessible fruit trees will produce all year long (Ezek. 47:8, 12). Water that is fresh and free of pollutants will be teeming with life even where that water was once barren (Ezek. 47:8-10). God brought order out of chaos before (Gen. 1:2). He commanded, and life obeyed (Gen. 1:20, 24). He will do it again.

He won’t just give life to the planet; He will also do it for the planet’s inhabitants. Life-spans will dramatically increase.

*“No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, Or an old man who does not live out his days; For the youth will die at the age of one hundred And the one who does not reach the age of one hundred Will be thought accursed.”* (Isaiah 65:20)

Through the use of synthetic drugs, we try to increase life-spans today. Those drugs will not be necessary then because God will use the plants to bring healing directly (Ezek. 47:12). Death will still happen, but not as often. No one will fear it, at least not those who have a good relationship with Jesus. Some will live their whole lives surrounded by people who have already experienced death and resurrected to tell about it. No one will die alone. Instead of being entertained with violence, we will celebrate life (Isaiah 65:25). Life will be productive. We will get to enjoy the fruits of our labor rather than having them stolen from us by marauders or circumstances (Isaiah 65:21-23). People will leave a legacy for their children (Isaiah 65:23).

God will give new life to Israel too.

*“Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob and have mercy on the whole house of Israel, and I will be jealous for My holy name. They will forget their disgrace and all their treachery which they perpetrated against Me when they live securely on their own land with no one to make them afraid. When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land, and I will leave none of them there any longer. I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,’ declares the Lord GOD.”* (Ezek. 39:25-29)

1. Jesus’ kingdom will be a time of righteousness (Isaiah 9:6-7; Rev. 19:11).

Much of the death we currently experience happens because of crime. What do you think would happen to the crime rate if every time a crime occurred, the authorities quickly caught the person, and they administered the appropriate penalty? No lawyers, no appeals, just justice. And it *is* justice because the All-knowing God is the Person sitting behind the bench. There is no possibility of innocence being misdiagnosed. Imagine what would happen to the homicide statistics if murder guaranteed the death penalty, not twenty years down the road but tomorrow! You might even start obeying the speed limit if you knew every time you went over it, the blue lights were going to shine in your rearview mirror.

Jesus will be tough on crime. Scripture repeatedly records that Jesus will rule with a “rod of iron” (Psalm 2; Rev. 12:5; 19:15). His subordinates will too (Rev. 2:27). A rod in Scripture was a symbol of authority (Ex. 4:17; Ps. 23:4; 125:3). It also served as a standard of measurement (Rev. 11:1) or expectation (Prov. 13:24). In the area of morality, we call these standards laws.

What if you made your rod out of something that was flexible? If the measurement didn’t appeal to you, you could bend the means of measurement. Imagine being able to measure your height, weight, and waist size with flexible standards. It might make you feel better about yourself, but it wouldn’t change the physical parameters of your body. What if laws were flexible? Justice would bend.

The true standard does *not* bend. Jesus *is* that standard. Scripture speaks of the foolishness of using other standards to measure righteousness. He says our righteousness – what looks good to us – is like “filthy rags” to Him (Is. 64:6). When we measure ourselves against each other, He calls us foolish (2 Cor. 10:12).

For those who did not live up to the standard, the rod became a means of punishment (Prov. 10:3; 22:15) even destruction (Ps. 2:9). Just as a ruler or yardstick unmistakably shows length and distance, so a standard of morality is designed to be a unbendable means of evaluation and consequence for all people. That standard will be applied equally.

Jesus will be just with all criminals. Our current legal system does not use a rod of iron to evaluate or administer justice. If you are part of the minority[[2]](#endnote-2), or if you are poor[[3]](#endnote-3), you are more likely to face conviction and a more severe penalty for your crime. Our rod bends. Jesus does not use a standard that bends – not for anyone. His rod is composed of iron. No bribery. No favoritism. No prejudice. No powerplays. Only one Judge. His name is Jesus, and He is merciful.

Wait a minute. How can Jesus be just *and* merciful? Because He already paid the penalty for whatever crime any person commits in the future or today.

*“Lovingkindness [mercy] and truth [justice] have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” (Psalm 85:10)*

Habakkuk’s prayer was that in God’s justified anger at Judah for her moral failures, He would also remember mercy (Hab. 3:2). Jesus knows not only the actions, but the person’s intentions, their extenuating circumstances, and their past offenses. Jesus loves you. He also loves all the other citizens of His Kingdom and will, therefore, implement whatever correction is necessary to protect those citizens *from* you and bring about justice.

Justice doesn’t excite you unless you have experienced injustice. Someone got the job you deserved. They got it because of their ethnicity, their gender or their connections. The person who horrendously hurt your loved one walks free because of their high-priced lawyer or because they “cut a deal” with the district attorney. The insurance company won’t authorize the treatment for your daughter’s illness. You have to find food in the town trash heap and drink water from a putrid stream while other parts of the world have a surplus which they waste and complain about. Where is the justice? During Jesus’ reign, righteousness and justice will rule.

1. Jesus’ kingdom will be a time of rest (Is. 19:18-25).

We’re not talking about retirement or inactivity. We’re talking about internal rest – no worry, no unhealthy competition, no greed. You’ll be able to sleep peacefully at night without locking your doors. We’ll still be motivated to accomplish, but our motivation then will be the glory of Jesus, not our own personal glory. You’ll be able to freely share your resources because you won’t fear shortages anymore.

There will be no more war. Jesus said the frequency and severity of wars would increase as His return draws closer. Once He is here, war will cease.

*“And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.”* (Isaiah 2:4)

When two or more nations can’t settle a dispute diplomatically, war becomes their only option. The United Nations came into existence partially to give a forum for countries to express grievances and resolve disputes. As Jesus predicted, the incidence of conflict has only increased. War doesn’t end; it just changes its tactics and gets more costly. In the first ten years since 9/11, the United States spent $7.6 trillion on defense against terrorism.[[4]](#endnote-4) The Department of Homeland Security employed 229,000 people and had a budget of $40.6 billion in 2017.[[5]](#endnote-5) As of the time of this writing, almost 7000 people from the United States military have died fighting the war on terror.[[6]](#endnote-6) That number doesn’t take into account casualties from other countries. We spend so much to prepare for and fight wars. The financial cost will continue to rise, and people will continue to die.

Jesus paid the highest price to end all war. He sacrificed His own blood. Jesus paid the price once for all, and it was *finished*. Mission accomplished.

Still, we fight. One of the most volatile battlefields is in the Middle East. The objective of this battle is Palestine. Israel’s enemies currently surround her, and each of them is working for her destruction. Scripture instructs us to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Ps. 122:6). Right now, she has no peace. But she will. Isaiah prophecies a day when Assyrians, Egyptians, and Israelis will all worship the same God. Instead of being enemies, they will be allies (Isaiah 19:21-25)! Right now, Jesus takes away our fear and provides internal peace even in the midst of conflict (Psalm 23). One day, He will take away the conflict itself by dealing with the source of that conflict.

1. **Step #5 – Give people a choice. Jesus will release Satan** (Rev. 20:7-8).

Satan is the source of all conflict. At the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom, Jesus will release him from his prison. Scripture records that hordes of people, as numerous as “the sands on the seashore” – the same terminology God used to describe the descendants of Abraham – will rebel against Jesus.

For 1000 years, Satan will have endured incarceration. For the same 1000 years, Jesus has been on the throne. Life has been good. Jesus has proved Himself as a great, good leader by keeping His citizens safe and providing for them. They don’t have to question the existence of God. They’ve heard his voice on CNN – the Christian New Network – every night. How could anyone rebel against a leader who has provided this kind of environment for this long?

Think about the generations that followed Moses, Joshua, and Jesus. Moses preached the book of Deuteronomy to a generation who had not seen God’s power displayed in Egypt. Thankfully, they got to see it for themselves as they crossed the Jordan River and overcame the giants in the land. Joshua later challenged them to make their own choice for the object of their worship (Joshua 24:14-18). Their parents could not choose for them nor would they always be there to rehearse for them the struggles God brought them through. So, God gave festivals to the Jewish people partially as a perpetual reminder to the Jews of the path they had traveled and the sacrifices made to get them to their present situation.

Sadly, the Jews’ allegiance to Joshua’s God did not long endure after his death (Josh. 24:31; Judges 2:10-11). And just two generations after Jesus, He wrote to the church at Ephesus and complained that they had left their first love (Rev. 2:4). In more recent history, think about the generations that followed great religious movements like the Reformation and the First Great Awakening. The reason there had to be a Second Great Awakening was the grandchildren of the colonialists had fallen asleep. Within a generation or two of the Reformation, the passion of the Reformers had given way to cold orthodoxy in state churches. It is our natural tendency to fall away, especially so the further removed we get from the sacrifices of our ancestors.

After you’ve experienced perfection for 1000 years, it’s difficult to remember the pain that got you there. The reasons Jesus’ resurrection body still bore the scars of His crucifixion were to verify His identity to His disciples and to remind humanity throughout eternity of the price Jesus paid for their salvation. Because these generations will have known nothing but Jesus’ rule, they will have nothing with which to compare it. One of the sad realities of human civilization is we do not value what we did not struggle for. They might start to wonder if there is someplace where the grass is greener.

For those who for whatever reason don’t like life under Jesus’ rule, any opportunity to get out from underneath it will be irresistible. It’s the same reason children rebel against loving parents. Rules, rules, rules. They can’t see past the rules to get to the relationship.

Why does Jesus let Satan out? The answer to that question leads us to a larger, harder one. Since God knew what Lucifer was going to do, why did God create him? God created Lucifer to give us a choice. Elections give us a choice. I have more than one person I can vote for. Romance gives us a choice. I had more than one person I could have married.

What if you were the only man left on the planet, and your wife “chose” you to marry? That wouldn’t be a choice. That would be a lack of options. You would always wonder if she said “yes” because she loved you or because saying “no” would mean never marrying. Love requires a choice. So Jesus gave us one. And He will give a choice to the people born in the Millennial Kingdom too.

One more question. Why even have a Millennial Kingdom? Why not just deal with Satan at the end of the Tribulation? It’s over. It’s done. Bring in the demolition crew. Let’s move directly into new heavens and new earth. One of the purposes of the Millennial Kingdom is to prove that evil is not a result of environment. Right now, people blame their sin on a variety of causes. They had poor parenting. They were poor. They were rich. The government didn’t take care of them. They didn’t have a good education. Jesus will take away all the external causes of evil and finally prove one thing. Evil is *inside* us.

1. **Step #6 – Deal with lingering threats. Jesus will banish Satan and those who follow him** (Rev. 20:9-10).

Evil is also around us. God told the Israelites to obliterate the Canaanites when they entered the land. They did not. Instead, they subdued their enemies enough to turn them into their servants. They developed a symbiotic relationship. As long as the Canaanites carried their wood and water, the Israelites did not destroy them (Joshua 9:21-27). God knew and warned Israel that disobeying Him in this regard would lead to great suffering for Israel. For generations, Israel faced oppression by a series of different adversaries. They also brought God’s judgment by leading Israel into idolatry.

*“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’”* (1 Cor. 15:33)

When your enemy is defeated, if there is no hope of regeneration, your only option is destruction. You may not like what God told Israel to do to the Canaanites, but in the case of Satan and his followers, God’s penalty for them is clearly just and appropriate. They have proved themselves to be a constant threat. The day will come when Satan and his influence will be permanently gone.

**Conclusion:** The Millennial Kingdom is a time of unparalleled peace. It has the Prince of Peace as its King. But the Kingdom begins and ends with war. The only way to have permanent peace is to eliminate those who struggle for control and are willing to fight to maintain it (Psalm 120:7). Once Satan and his followers are gone, there will be no more war.

There is a war happening in your heart right now. The battles we have discussed here *will* happen. They are in the future. You determine your side right now, in the present. There are only two combatants – Jesus and Satan. Both of them are fighting for control of your life. Jesus’ weaponry includes truth, love, and faith. Satan is armed with deception. Jesus wants you on His side so that He can bless you. He’s trying to rescue you. Satan wants to destroy you and prevent you from enjoying a love relationship with God. The only reason he wants you is to fulfill a vendetta against God. He doesn’t care about you. He just cares about hurting God. You decide who wins. Be careful. There is no way to be neutral in this battle. Jesus said if you are not with Him, then you are against Him (Matt. 12:30).

Do you want to end the war in your life? In his song, Edwin Starr says this, “They say we must fight to keep our freedom, but there’s got to be a better way.” There is. Surrender. Surrender to the Kingship of Jesus. He will give you peace for now and confidence for a glorious future.

Don’t procrastinate on this decision. If you do, Satan wins by default. The day of your death is the day of his victory if you have not decided to follow Jesus by that day. People are dropping all around you. There’s no time to waste. Who’s going to win the battle in your life today? You can have peace with Jesus, or you can have destruction with Satan. Whose side are you on?

1. “Friedrich Nietzsche>Quotes>Quotable Quote”; goodreads; retrieved Feb, 2018 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2017”; Prison Policy Initiative; Peter Wagner and Bernadette Rabuy; March 14, 2017; retrieved Feb, 2018 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. “Prisons of Poverty”; Prison Policy Initiative; Bernadette Rabuy and Daniel Kopf; July 9, 2015; retrieved Feb, 2018 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. “U. S. Security Spending since 9/11”; National Priorities Project; May 26, 2011; retrieved Feb, 2018 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. “FY 2017 Budget-In-Brief”; Homeland Security; retrieved Feb, 2018 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Icasualties; retrieved Feb, 2018 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)