

CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL & ETERNAL RULE

REGAL DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN
THE MILLENNIAL AGE AND THE ETERNAL AGES

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“...Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Ask of me, and I will give to thee the heathen [the Gentiles] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potters vessel” (Ps. 2:7b-9).

Christ will rule the nations with “a rod of iron,” and He has promised His co-heirs that they will exercise this power and authority with Him (Ps. 2:9; Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15).

Absolute Power and Authority

The words “*break* them with a rod of iron” rather than “*rule* them with a rod of iron” (as in Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15) are used in Ps. 2:9. The Hebrew word translated “break” in this passage, contextually, refers to *absolute force* which will be used to bring and keep the nations under subjection to the “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

A cognate form of this word appears in Dan. 2:40 where, contextually, the word refers to a similar (but not absolute) force which will be used by Antichrist to bring and keep the nations under subjection to him during the Tribulation.

The words “broken to pieces” and “break in pieces” in Dan. 2:35, 44, 45 are the translations of a different word though, which, through comparing Ps. 2:1-9, has to do with *the absolute, total destruction* of the kingdom of Antichrist by Christ at the end of the Tribulation; and this will be followed by *Christ's absolute control* over the nations during the succeeding Messianic Era, when the “great mountain” (Christ's kingdom) *fills* “the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35).

The Greek word translated “rule” in Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15 means to *shepherd*. This is the same word translated “feed [*lit.*, ‘shepherd’ (referring to *shepherding the flock of God*)]” in Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:2. The thought behind this word when used in the sense of “rule” can possibly best be seen by its use in Matt. 2:6:

“And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall *rule* [‘shepherd’] my people Israel.”

The Governor, in this respect, will be a *Shepherd* over the nations; and His co-heirs will exhibit like qualities.

However, this shepherding will be accomplished through *absolute force*. There will be no such thing as a toleration of disobedience among the Gentile nations in that day (*cf.* Ps. 101:1-8; Isa. 66:19-24; Zech. 14:16-21). The shepherding will be carried out through the use of authority described as “a rod [sceptre] of iron.”

A shepherd in Israel during Old Testament days possessed a *wooden staff*; but the Chief Shepherd and His co-heirs during that coming day will wield a *staff of iron*. And with this staff, the Gentile nations, as “the vessels of a potter” when struck, will be “broken to shivers.”

Note that these same words are used relative to both the rule of Christ in Ps. 2:9 and the rule of His co-heirs in Rev. 2:27. The rule by both Christ and His co-heirs will, in this respect, be identical in nature.

Duration of Power and Authority

Scripture teaches that the exercise of governmental power and authority by Christ and His co-heirs will not end when the 1,000-year millennial day has run its course. Rather, the exercise of such power and authority will extend into and last throughout the eternal ages beyond the Millennium. But Scripture does *not* teach that this rule will continue *unchanged* into these eternal ages. To the contrary, Scripture teaches just the opposite. The rule by Christ and His co-heirs during the ages beyond the Millennium will be *quite different* than their rule during the Millennium.

First, there is the matter of Christ's throne. His throne is *eternal*, but not as a separate entity from the Father's throne. Conditions of this nature are millennial only (Heb. 1:8; Rev. 3:21; 22:3). Christ, with His co-heirs, will reign from His Own throne until He has “put down all rule and all authority and power.” Then, when “all things” have been subjected unto Christ, the kingdom will be delivered up “to God, even the Father,” with all things subjected unto

Christ, in order that “God may be all in all [*lit.*, ‘all things in all of these things’]” (I Cor. 15:24-28). This will occur at the end of the Millennium, and Christ will then assume a position on a central throne with His Father called, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1, 3).

Second, there is the matter of the location of Christ's throne. During the Millennium, Christ's throne will be in the new Jerusalem positioned in the heavens above the present earth. During the eternal ages, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” will, likewise, be in the new Jerusalem; but the location of the new Jerusalem will be quite different. The present heavens and earth will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium, and a new heavens and a new earth will be brought into existence.

The new Jerusalem will rest upon the new earth, and God Himself will reside therein, sitting on a throne, with His Son alongside. A rule from the heavens over the earth (millennial) will be a thing of the past, and “the throne of God and of the Lamb” will become the central point in the heavens of an eternal rule extending throughout the universe (*cf.* II Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1ff).

Third, there is the matter of the manner in which Christ will rule. During the Millennium, Christ and His co-heirs will rule the nations with “a rod of iron”; but a rule after this fashion would be out of place during the eternal ages. During the Millennium, *absolute force* will be used to bring and keep the nations under subjection; but such will be unnecessary during the eternal ages. Conditions on the new earth will be quite different than millennial conditions on the present earth. There will be no more sin, death, etc. (Rev. 21:3, 4); and this will allow for numerous changes in the manner of the administration of governmental affairs.

Satan will be bound in the abyss during the Millennium, but at the conclusion of the Millennium he will be loosed for “a little season [‘short time’].” The rebellion evident among nations during the Millennium, necessitating the rule with “a rod of iron,” will then be brought to a head. The rebel nations will ally with Satan and under his banner march against Christ and His co-heirs in one final, vain, climactic thrust. The entire matter though will be speedily brought to an end through *fire* “from God out of heaven” (*cf.* Ezek. 28:18b, 19).

Satan will then be cast into the lake of fire, the judgment of the unsaved dead from throughout Man's Day and the Millennium will occur, and the time for major changes will be at hand. At this time the kingdom will be delivered up to the Father, the present heavens and earth will pass out of existence, the new heavens and new earth

will come into existence, the new Jerusalem will descend from heaven to rest upon the new earth, and the throne of God and the throne of Christ will become *one* throne. The nations will then dwell upon the new earth, with God Himself dwelling in their midst.

(God rules from a place in the heavens over the entire universe. Then, provinces throughout His universe are governed by appointed rulers who evidently exercise their delegated power and authority from places in the heavens in relation to the province being ruled [e.g., Satan and his angels presently rule from a place in the heavens in relation to the earth (cf. Dan. 10:13-20; Eph. 2:2; 6:11, 20)], and this structured rule would evidently be the same relative to provinces ruled by angels elsewhere in the universe [i.e., ruled from places in the heavens in relation to the different provinces]. It is in this manner that “the heavens do rule” [beginning with God, the supreme Ruler over all].)

During the Messianic Era, Christ and His bride will exercise delegated power and authority over the earth from the same sphere in which Satan and His angels presently rule [cf. Job 16:15; Rev. 12:7-12]. Then, during the eternal ages, the new earth will be the place in the heavens from whence universal rule will emanate [in the heavens in relation to the entire universe, as God’s present dwelling place is in the heavens in relation to the entire universe].)

1) Crowns, Rewards — Millennial or Eternal

Promises to Christians concerning crowns, rewards, etc. are to be realized during the millennial age rather than during the eternal ages. Many conditions surrounding proffered positions with Christ will not exist during the eternal ages, as noted in previous comments concerning differences in Christ’s reign during the Millennium and during the ages beyond.

(Note, for example, the overcomer’s promises in Revelation chapters two and three. That these promises are millennial only in nature is made plain by several of the promises.)

In the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Smyrna, it is evident that death will exist during the Millennium [Rev. 2:11; cf. Rom. 8:13]; but this will not be the case beyond the Millennium, during the eternal ages [Rev. 21:4]. In the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Thyatira, ruling with “a rod of iron” is in view [2:26-28]. And no such scene as this exists during the present dispensation; nor will such a scene exist during the eternal ages. Then, in the overcomer’s promise to the Church in Laodicea, Christ’s throne is in view. Christ is not seated on His Own throne today; nor will this throne exist separate from the Father’s throne beyond the Millennium [cf. Heb. 1:13; Rev. 3:21; 22:1, 3].)

Thus, it is plain that the things seen in the overcomer’s promises in these two chapters can be realized during the Millennial Era alone. They can have nothing to do with the eternal ages beyond the Millennium.)

This, however, does not at all teach that the reign of Christ and Christians will end at the conclusion of the Millennium. This only shows that their reign during the eternal ages will be *outside* the scope of the overcomer’s promises and *quite different* than their reign during the preceding Millennium.

God’s revelation to man concerns itself with “time” — *seven thousand years of time* — from the creation of Adam to the end of the Messianic Kingdom. Very little is revealed about that which occurred before the creation of Adam, and very little is revealed about that which will occur beyond the Millennium. Scripture does reveal though that the reign of Christ and Christians will continue, and the length of this continuing reign is specifically stated to be “forever and ever [Gk., *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, ‘with respect to the ages of the ages,’ i.e., ‘throughout the endless ages’]” (Rev. 11:15; 22:3-5).

The activity of Christ and Christians in this continuing reign is not revealed in so many words, but Scripture does present enough information that several observations can be made:

A) Extent of Christ’s Rule

The rule of Christ itself during the eternal ages will no longer be limited to the earth. Rather, it will extend beyond the earth (the new earth), out into the universe.

Christ will be seated upon a throne from which there will be an administration of power and authority throughout the universe (“the throne of God and of the Lamb” [Rev. 22:3]); and the Christians’ continuing rule “with Christ” (Rev. 22:5) would have to be of a like nature, for the power will no longer emanate from *Christ’s throne*, but from *the throne of God and of the Lamb*. In this respect, the rule by Christ and His co-heirs *over the earth* during the Millennium can only be extended to a rule *over worlds throughout the universe* following the Millennium.

B) Millennial and Eternal Blessings

To what extent though, if any, will rewards realized by overcoming Christians during the Millennium carry over into the eternal ages beyond? The question is really unanswerable.

The wiping away of all tears at the conclusion of the Millennium and the fact that the overcomer’s promises are

millennial only in nature would clearly indicate that distinctions which existed during the millennial age between overcoming and nonovercoming Christians will not exist during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium. But, to take matters beyond this point and say that *no rewards* exercised by overcoming Christians during the millennial age will extend over into the eternal ages beyond the Millennium (or have any bearing on the place which they will occupy beyond the Millennium) would be carrying matters beyond Scriptural grounds. Scripture simply does not deal with the matter.

2) All Things New

The Millennium will not, as many envision, be a time of perfection. Such a state awaits the first of many ages beyond the Millennium. *The restoration of all things* will occur before the Millennium, at the end of six thousand years of time; but *the making of all things new* awaits the completion of the Millennium, at the end of seven thousand years of time (cf. Acts 3:21; Rev. 21:5). Only then will a *perfect order* in all of God’s creation exist.

As the present age (Man’s Day) has a purpose, so will the millennial age (the Lord’s Day); and the ultimate goal of *all* will be realized in the ages beyond. The rulers for the millennial age are being acquired during the present age; and during the millennial age these rulers will, as co-heirs with Christ, participate in the age-long work of bringing all things under subjection to Christ. Such a work, brought to pass through a rule with “a rod of iron,” anticipates the ages beyond the Millennium, in which a rule with “a rod of iron” will no longer be necessary; and the reason for man’s creation will then be realized in its fullest sense.

Man will not only realize the reason for his creation during the Millennium but also during the eternal ages beyond the Millennium. Dominion will be restricted to this earth during the Millennium, but not so during the eternal ages after the new heavens and new earth have been brought into existence. Man’s rule in that day can only extend into places throughout the universe itself, and man will evidently have access to the universe (something which will not be the case at all during the Millennium).

This appears to be the clear teaching derived from Scriptures touching upon the subject.

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