
Revelation 20:4-6 - And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Notice also that this 1000 years separates this First Resurrection (v-5) from the another resurrection that happens later when “rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.” The rest of the dead do come to life when the 1000 years are completed and they are judged before the Great White Throne according to their deeds and thrown in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:11-15). These two physical resurrections of dead people are commonly spoken of in the Bible as the two resurrections, one for the righteous and one for the wicked (Dan 12:1-3, John 5:28-29, Acts 24:15). Here is the fulfillment of those passages, now seen clearly in Revelation separated by a 1000 years period at the dawn of the Age to come. This 1000 years has several features that describe the nature and activity of this Millennium;

- Satan is bound in the abyss so he won’t deceive the nations until after the 1000 years (v-1-3)
- Christ reigns for 1000 years (v-4,6), described in the Old Testament passages above
- Saints are resurrected and given thrones of judgment and reign with Him (v-4,6)
- Two Resurrections separated by 1000 years of the righteous and the wicked (v-5)

Then in verses 7-10 this specific time period of 1000 years is said to be “completed” and followed by very specific events. All of this is still in the chronology of John’s one vision, which started back in chapter 19:1 and continuing all the way to 21:9.

Revelation 20:7-10 - And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison; 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. 9 And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. NASB

These events that follow the 1000 years include the final destruction of Satan (v-10) and all the rebel nations whom he has deceived to gather for war against Christ and His saints at Jerusalem (v-9). The vision continues with the Great White Throne judgment, which is the final judgment of all the wicked, the Second Resurrection.

Revelation 20:11-15 - 11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. NASB

At the close of this first phase of the Age to come, Satan, Death and Hades, and all the wicked have met their final judgment and banished into the Lake of Fire forever. Here is the end of evil forever as “He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away” (Rev 21:4). It is at this time that the old heaven and earth pass away (21:1) and God creates a New Heaven and Earth (21:1), which is the eternal state from this time forward, and only the redeemed of
the Lord live in this state forever in an endless Day in His presence, privilege, and blessing, world without end (Rev 21:1-22:9).

A face value reading of this passage reveals a very specific chronology of events that God has laid out for the Age to come. In these pages is marked out the final and last days of the fallen world of sinners in rebellion against God, and the ushering in of the age of God’s Kingdom upon the earth, for the man Christ Jesus, the promised seed of David, must reign upon His throne from Jerusalem at His coming. After He has fulfilled the golden age of His Millennial rule, He shall utterly and finally destroy all His enemies, including death and Satan.

Revelation 19-22 Timeline
Chart by shaansloan@att.net

Marriage Supper of the Lamb Announced (v-1-9)
- Rejoicing of Great Multitude and Saints

Second Coming (v-11-16)
- Power and Glory with Angels and Saints
- Beast, False Prophet, Kings of the earth and 200M man Army destroyed

Battle of Armageddon (v-17-21)
- For 1000 years so that he would deceive the nations no longer

Satan Bound (v-1-3)
- They came to life and reigned with Christ 1000 years

Reign of Christ with Saints (v-4-6)
- Satan loosed to deceive nations who make war with Saints-Christ at Jerusalem
- Gog-Magog Battle Nations-Satan Destroyed

Final Rebellion (v-7-10)
- Destruction of Death and Hell in Lake of Fire Judgement of the Wicked Dead

Great White Throne Judgment (v-11-15)
- First Heaven and earth has passed away

Creation New Heavens and Earth (v-21:1-7)
- Eternal Kingdom

Second Coming Millennium 1000 years After the 1000 years

Revelation 19 Revelation 20 Revelation 21-22

Paul speaks clearly of this reign after the Second Coming and includes language about Christ conquering all His enemies during His reign, including death.

1 Corinthians15:22-28 - 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming; 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death; 27 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. NASB

At this great end of His enemies He will also destroy the present heavens and earth and create a new heavens and earth where His people shall lie down in peace forever in the presence of God. Peter also refers to this destruction of the heavens and earth, at its final end which is pictured in Rev 20:11-15.

2 Peter 3:10-13 - 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. NASB

Now therefore this passage in Revelation holds out a clear chronology of events to unfold at the Second Coming. This includes an obvious 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth with His Saints.
The Millennium in the Old Testament

As the chronology of events in Revelation 19-21 clearly shows a 1000 year earthly reign of Christ with His saints upon the earth while Satan is bound, surely we would expect this to be reflected in the many passages in the Old Testament prophets. Indeed there is clear evidence for this “intermediate kingdom” between the time of Christ’s Second Coming and the Eternal State. This is the discussion of Matt Waymeyer in chapters 2-5 of his book “Amillennialism and the Age to Come – A Premillennial Critique of the Two Age Model.” In it he presents many of these passages and argues that the “age to come” spoken of in the New Testament unfolds in two phases. Phase one is the 1000 years of Messianic Rule over a yet imperfect world, and phase two is the eternal state in that perfection where God’s presence has come to dwell with men and sin and death have been destroyed forever after the Millennium in the New Heavens and Earth, just as Revelation 19-22 has made clear. As the Old Testament passages look forward to the Messianic Age, they do indeed speak of a time distinct from both the current Church Age, and the final consummation in the Eternal State. Because these passages describe conditions which do not fit either time period, they appear to indicate some future stage in redemptive history which is far greater than the present Church Age and but which still does not see the removal of all sin and rebellion and death from the earth. This “intermediate kingdom” is characterized by peace, righteousness, eternal blessing, and immortality, and yet at the same time in some passages includes the presence of sin, rebellion, and human death. These passages portray the righteous rule of the Messiah in a yet imperfect world, with conditions not compatible with the Eternal State, therefore they indeed do speak of that intermediate kingdom which Revelation 20 has clarified and made explicit, explaining that there is a yet imperfect period after the Second Coming yet before the Eternal State which lasts for at 1000 years. Wayne Grudem comments on page 1129 of his Systematic Theology; “several Old Testament passages seem to fit neither in the present age or in the eternal state.” With this idea in mind, let us examine some of these passages in the Old Testament and see if they do indeed reveal such a time in redemptive history. The first is that Messianic Psalm 72.

Psalm 72:1-20 - 1 Give the king Thy judgments, O God, And Thy righteousness to the king's son. 2 May he judge Thy people with righteousness, And Thine afflicted with justice. 3 Let the mountains bring peace to the people, And the hills in righteousness. 4 May he vindicate the afflicted of the people, Save the children of the needy, And crush the oppressor; 5 Let them fear Thee while the sun endures, And as long as the moon, throughout all generations. 6 May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, Like showers that water the earth. 7 In his days may the righteous flourish, And abundance of peace till the moon is no more. 8 May he also rule from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. 9 Let the nomads of the desert bow before him; And his enemies lick the dust. 10 Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. 11 And let all kings bow down before him, All nations serve him. 12 For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help, The afflicted also, and him who has no helper. 13 He will have compassion on the poor and needy, And the lives of the needy he will save. 14 He will rescue their life from oppression and violence; And their blood will be precious in his sight; 15 So may he live; and may the gold of Sheba be given to him; And let them pray for him continually; Let them bless him all day long. 16 May there be abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains; Its fruit will wave like the cedars of Lebanon; And may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth. 17 May his name endure forever; May his name increase as long as the sun shines; And let men bless themselves by him; Let all nations call him blessed. 18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. 19 And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen. 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. NASB

See here that very time when the “king’s son” will rule the world from “sea to sea” and yet He “will judge with righteousness and peace, save the needy and crush the oppressor.” During this time His enemies will “lick the dust and all kings will bow down before Him and all nations serve Him” while He “has compassion on the poor and needy and rescues their life from oppression
and violence.” Clearly this time period is not like the present age for world goes on with none to save the needy and the poor as they are crushed by oppression and violence, and neither is the king’s son ruling and all nations calling him blessed, or all kings and nations bowing down before Him and serving Him. This is indeed a period in redemptive history that will happen after the Second Coming but falls short of that perfect world of the Eternal State. Revelation 20 shows this to be the Millennial Rule of Christ for 1000 years with His saints. Isaiah speaks of a similar time.

Isaiah 2:2-4 - 2 Now it will come about that in the last days, The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, ”Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 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. NASB

Again we see a period yet to happen in history where “all the nations stream to Jerusalem to learn His ways and sit before His seat of judgment where he renders decisions for many peoples.” Micah repeats this prophecy.

Micah 4:1-4 – 1 And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. 2 And many nations will come and say, ”Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 3 And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then 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 train for war. 4 And each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. NASB

Isaiah speaks in other places of such a time, but yet includes the feature of prophetic perspective (prophetic conflation) so that the features of both phases of the age to come are included. So the prophet sees a time when the righteous rule of Messiah is present, yet in an imperfect world of sin, and then looks beyond to that time when all creation will be restored and no sin or imperfection is present any longer.

Isaiah 11:1-9 - 1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear. 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the kid, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze; Their young will lie down together; And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 And the nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. NASB

And this is not the only time that Isaiah uses prophetic perspective or conflation to see both phases of the age to come. That famous passage in chapter 65 where the prophet sees the New Heavens and Earth, mentioned also in Revelation 21 after the Millennium (which we commonly call the eternal state), and yet describes it with features of that time in a yet imperfect world where the curse of human death yet remains.

Isaiah 65:17-25 - 17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 "But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing, And her people for gladness. 19 "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of weeping and the sound of crying. 20 "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 Shall be thought accursed, 21 "And they shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 "They shall not build, and another inhabit, They shall not plant, and another eat; For as the lifetime of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My chosen ones shall wear out the work of their hands. 23 "They shall not labor in vain, Or bear children for calamity; For they are the offspring of those blessed by the Lord, And their descendants with them. 24 "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. 25 "The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says the Lord. NASB

How can we harmonize a passage like this without the clear chronology of events shown in the book of Revelation chapter 19-21? What would seem very obscure and impossible to figure out becomes very clear and easy to understand in light of the fact that Revelation 20 portrays a time period just like this, which is the first phase of the age to come where the Messiah rules in a yet imperfect world (Rev 20:1-10), but which ends and then continues in the Eternal State of perfection (Rev 21:22-22) after He has put all His enemies under His feet, including Satan, sin an death (1 Cor 15:22-28, Rev 20:11-15). This righteous rule of Messiah over a yet imperfect world we have also seen in that passage in Zechariah 14 which clearly shows a period of history that has yet to happen in history and must happen after the Second Coming, and yet falls short of the glory of the perfect Eternal State.

Zechariah 14:16-20 - 16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths; 17 And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. 18 And it if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. NASB

Here again notice that presence of nations rebelling against the righteous rule of Messiah and being punished by Him with His Sovereign power over the weather, sending “no rain on them.” And yet it is a time when “all the families of the earth” are going up to “Jerusalem to worship the King.” Hardly anything like the present church age, yet a time that falls short of the Eternal State because sin and rebellion are still present. This passage would be impossible to harmonize in Scripture without what Revelation’s timeline has clearly revealed. Chapters 6-18 of Revelation show cataclysmic judgments from God upon the sinful rebellion of the world that precedes the Second Coming of Christ which happens at the end of chapter 19, at which time Christ destroys the kings of the earth. Then Satan is bound for 1000 years so that Christ will rule the world in a time of peace with His Saints, but yet sin is not eradicated for His rule will be one of force over the nations who still will finally rebel. After this, He will finally destroy Satan, sin an death, and all the wicked dead will be judged and destroyed forever in Revelation 20:11-15 at the Great White Throne judgment. This sequence of events is also revealed by Isaiah in his prophecy of God’s judgment upon the nations of the world in chapter 24. Verses 1-20 speaks of cataclysmic judgments from God directed upon the nations of the world, and then in verses 21-23 the host of heaven are imprisoned for many days until they are finally punished.

Isaiah 24:21-23 - 21 So it will happen in that day, That the Lord will punish the host of heaven, on high, And the kings of the earth, on earth. 22 And they will be gathered together Like prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they will be punished. 23 Then the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders. NASB

Passages like this in the Old Testament that don’t contain the clarity of New Testament revelation would be very difficult to understand without the clarity and light that we have from the Apostles. But when compared to the timeline of Revelation 19-21 they make perfect sense. See in these few
passages from the Old Testament that intermediate kingdom of the Millennial Rule of Christ portrayed in the visions of these prophets. I want to wholeheartedly recommend that you study this further and the book by Matt Waymeyer, “Amillennialism and the Age to Come – A Premillennial Critique of the Two Age Model,” contains a lengthy bible study of these passages interacting with arguments from those who use the Two Age model as an interpretive grid to understand the end time chronology. In summing up this brief section of our study, let me quote from Matt’s book page 82-83; “In the Old Testament passages considered in chapters 2 -5, the prophets looked ahead to the glorious reign of the coming Messiah. During this time, the Messiah will reign as king over the entire world, all the kings of the earth will bow down before him, all the nations of the earth will serve him, and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed by the exercise of his rule. Knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth, and the whole world will be filled with his glory. He will reign in peace, justice, righteousness, and faithfulness, resulting in longevity of life and lasting peace and harmony among the nations of the world. The kingdom reign of the messiah portrayed in these passages clearly transcends what takes place in the present age and will not be ushered in until the second coming of Jesus Christ. But these passages also contain features of the coming kingdom which are incompatible with the perfection of the Eternal state. For example, this kingdom reign of Messiah will include the existence of the poor, the wicked, the needy, the afflicted, enemies of God, and victims of violence and oppression. It will include physical birth and physical death, distinctions between the young and the elderly, the physical weakness due to old age. The nations will learn the ways of the Lord; disputes will continue to arise between them; and those who refuse to worship the king will be punished by the Lord. This portrayal of the coming kingdom reveals a certain amount of tension. The reign of Messiah will be characterized by peace, righteousness, and universal blessing, and yet human sin will continue to exist, sometimes requiring divine intervention to bring deliverance to the afflicted and judgment to the rebellious. These kingdom prophecies are not being presently fulfilled, and they are not compatible with the Eternal state. For this reason they necessitate a future stage in the history of redemption which is far greater than the present age but which does not see the removal of all sin and death from the earth. The key that brings all of these features together is the explicit New Testament revelation of a millennial kingdom between the second coming and the final judgment. In other words, what is strongly implied in the Old Testament prophets is clarified and made explicit in the book of Revelation, where the apostle John reveals 1000 year earthly reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. This intermediate kingdom in Revelation 20 separates the second coming of Revelation 19 and the internal state of Revelation 21-22… In contrast to the two age model of Amillennialism, the Old Testament provides clear evidence of an intermediate kingdom in which Jesus will reign upon the earth between the present age and the eternal state.”

See in these passages that the “age to come” spoken of in the New Testament unfolds in two phases. Phase one is the 1000 years of Messianic Rule over a yet imperfect world, and phase two is the eternal state in that perfection where God’s presence has come to dwell with men and sin and death have been destroyed forever after the Millennium in the New Heavens and Earth, just as Revelation 19-22 has made clear. As the Old Testament passages look forward to the Messianic Age, they do indeed speak of a time distinct from both the current Church Age, and the final consummation in the Eternal State. Because these passages describe conditions which do not fit either time period, they appear to indicate some future stage in redemptive history which is far greater than the present Church Age and yet still does not see the removal of all sin and rebellion and death from the earth, like that which is portrayed in the Eternal State. What is in the Old Testament prophets, is explicitly clarified in the book of Revelation, that is, a 1000 year reign of Messiah over a yet imperfect world.