

Small Group Guide

WHAT ULTIMATELY MATTERS REGARDING THE MILLENNIUM

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

October 21, 2012

Revelation 20

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

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Where We Need To Start Today...

- It is sanctifying to disagree about the millennium.
- It is sin to divide over the millennium.

What We Don't Know For Certain...

- When?
 - Are these passages arranged chronologically or cyclically?
 - Is the millennium before Christ returns or after Christ returns?
 - Is the millennium present (happening now) or future (still to come)?
- How long?
 - Is the millennium literally 1000 years?
 - Or is the millennium simply a planned, perfect, limited time?
- What and where?

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- Will the millennium involve a physical resurrection of Christians to reign on earth during the millennium?
- Will the millennium involve a spiritual resurrection of Christians to reign in heaven during the millennium?

What I Think I Know For Now...

- Christ has come once, and Satan has been bound.
 - Satan could not stop Christ.
 - Satan cannot stop Christians.
- We are in the millennium.
 - Christians who are alive now reign with Christ on earth.
 - Satan cannot keep the church from proclaiming the gospel, and he cannot keep the nations from believing the gospel.
 - Christians who have died now reign with Christ in heaven.
 - They are worshipping God as priests while they rule with Christ as judge.
- Christ will come again, and Satan will be obliterated.
 - After a final period of Satanic revolt, there will be a final point of Satanic defeat.
 - The return of Christ will usher in full and final judgment, once and for all.

What We All Know Forever...

- God is sovereign.
- Satan is subordinate.
 - He is limited and bound.
 - He is doomed to be defeated.
- The gospel will advance through the church.
- Jesus will return for the church.
- At the end of history, every single one of us will be judged by God.
 - Two Questions...
 - Did we put our faith in Christ's work?
 - Was their evidence of faith in our work?
 - Were we faithful in our worship?
 - Were we faithful in our witness?
 - Did we fight against sin?
 - Did we trust amidst suffering?
 - Two Destinations...
 - Eternal torment
 - Everlasting joy

Message Summary

While interpretations vary regarding timing, length, and location of the Millennium as described in Revelation 20, believers should bank their lives on the truths of God's sovereignty, Satan's subordination, the gospel's advance, Christ's return, and impending judgment. Christians should humbly approach this passage knowing that Bible-believing brothers and sisters land at different places on a spectrum of beliefs about the Millennium, that none of us will solve these issues, and that when joined with God in heaven God's people will be content with how all of these events pan out. Despite what we do not know for certain and what we think we know for now, at the end of history all people will be judged by God and head to two destinations – eternal torment or everlasting joy – based on whether or not they put their faith in Christ's work. In light of Christ's return, have you trusted in the work of Christ? Is there evidence of trust in the work of Christ in *your* work?

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Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- How can it be sanctifying to disagree about the Millennium? Describe what it looks like to disagree and to still be at peace with fellow believers. Begin in prayer over this group discussion, specifically for the group to remain focused on Christ and on the truths that unify while discussing this passage.
- What is the group's prior understanding of the Millennium? What have you been taught regarding the interpretation of Revelation 20, and what is the basis of the interpretation?
- The "second death" and "first resurrection" are mentioned in this passage. What definitions of these terms are provided in Revelation 20 itself (see Rev. 20:5-6, 14-15)?
- Explain the differences between the chronological view of Revelation 20 and the cyclical view of this passage (see Rev. 16:13-14; 19:19; 20:7-8 for an understanding of the cyclical view).
- Discuss the three different terms and views regarding the Millennium.
 - Premillennialists – They believe that Jesus will return *before* the Millennium.
 - Postmillennialists – They believe that Jesus will return *after* the Millennium.
 - Amillennialists – They believe that the Millennium *is in the present*, with Jesus returning *after* the Millennium.
- Even though we do not know for certain which view of the Millennium is correct, why is it important to think through what you believe on each of the issues regarding the timing, length, and location of the Millennium?
- Remembering that the purpose of Revelation is to rehearse for suffering believers that Christ has conquered Satan and sin and that, ultimately in Him, believers are more than conquerors, how should Satan's ultimate defeat affect how you live? Are you living in light of Christ's victory over Satan and sin? How so?
- Satan cannot prevent the church from proclaiming the gospel, nor can he prevent nations from believing the gospel. How should this affect your zeal and intentionality for witnessing to others about the truth of Christ's salvation? How should this affect how you pray for the lost? Pray together for the salvation of people around the world who are blinded by false religions, who are part of unreached people groups, and who are apathetic about the state of their souls.
- How should the truth of God's sovereignty guide our interpretation of Revelation? How should the truth of God's sovereignty, Satan's subordination, the gospel's advance, Jesus' return, and God's judgment affect how we live?
- If you knew the day and time of His return, how would you live? Is that an accurate description of how you are currently living? What regrets do you *not* want to have when He returns – with regard to family, the lost, friends, time, money, etc.?
- In Revelation 20:11-15, two books are described: "the books" and "the book of life." The book of life includes the names of each person who has trusted in Christ for salvation while "the books" record the deeds of each person (see Matt. 16:27; Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:10 for more information about judgment based on what a person has done). How does the book of life and the books work together to express that salvation is not based on works but on grace through faith in Christ? What would these two books indicate about you? What is the basis for your response?
- How is your faith evident in your works? How are you faithful in worship and witness, fighting against temptation, and trusting amidst suffering? If there is no fruit of faith in Christ, what does this indicate? Examine your heart to determine if you truly have trusted in Christ for salvation and submitted to His Lordship in your life.
- How are you personally involved in the gospel's advancement? If you are not faithful in witnessing, why? What practical steps can you take to grow in this area?
- How are you worshipping the things of this world? What sins do you struggle with? How are you fighting temptation in your life? In what ways can you grow in this area?
- Take time together to praise Christ for His work – for His death and resurrection. Praise Him for His defeat of Satan and sin. Praise Him for salvation. Praise Him that, even though we cannot fully explain and understand this prophecy, we can have assurance of salvation because of what *He* has done.

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Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Weekly Prayer Focus ... (from our worship guide)

- *Church: Ask for God's guidance, wisdom, and discernment as we seek to understand more fully the events described in Revelation. Pray for unity among our faith family in the midst of the differences we might have in interpreting Revelation. Praise God that we can know with certainty that Christ is returning and Satan is defeated. Praise Him for His salvation, a result of which we will one day find our names written in His book of life. Pray for those facing judgment for their sins. Ask God to graciously grant them the faith to repent of their sins and turn to Him for salvation.*
- *Local: This week we are praying for our annual Health Fair and Fall Festival outreach to the families in Marks Village and Gate City this Saturday, October 27. We are also praying this week for Harry Walls, Shades Mountain Independent Baptist Church.*
- *Global: This week we are praying for Brook Hills Long-Term Missionaries, Greg and Kathy Brown and daughters, Hannah and Haley. The Browns serve with Oneway Ministries in Guatemala. Their main role is to help strengthen their local church and provide support as the church reaches out to unreached areas. Kathy teaches kindergarten at a local school, and Greg provides ministry support to their church, hosts Short-Term teams, and serves on staff with Oneway Ministries. To learn more about the Browns, visit their blog: thebrownsinguatemala.com. This week we are also praying for our Short-Term team serving in North Africa.*