

Rev. 20:2-7

A consideration of various translations regarding the thousand years.

In the King James version “a thousand years” or “the thousand years” appears 6 times in these verses. However, we want to consider the best manuscripts and various translations.

The Sinaitic Manuscript has a complete New Testament. It is supposed to be written about 350 A.D. We consider it our first-class reference.

The Vatican 1209 is comparable in age and correctness, however, along with a few other books, it does not contain The Revelation.

The Alexandrian Manuscript is considered third best. It is thought to have been written in the 400s. It is missing a few texts, but it does have The Revelation.

The Syriac Peshitta is thought to originate prior to 200 A.D. However, several books, including The Revelation, might have been added later about the 600s.

And there are other good references that different Bible translators use in rendering their translation, each with their own preferences.

In verse 2, only the Sinaitic Manuscript omits the words found in the King James – “a thousand years (vs. 3) And cast him.” So then, verses 2 and 3, read together without these words, reads thus:

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till THE THOUSAND YEARS should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

However, if we do include the words omitted by the Sinaitic Manuscript it reads thus:

“And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him A THOUSAND YEARS, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, till THE THOUSAND YEARS should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

In verse 3 above, all the leading translations have “the thousand years.” This indicates a specific thousand years.

Verse 4. There are different ways translators have rendered this verse. In the Diaglott, both the interlinear side and Mr. Wilson's side, use "the thousand years." They both include the Greek word for "the" in the text. However, the Sinaitic Manuscript leaves it open as well as the Alexandrian, which can imply "a." However, like the Diaglott, in the "Concordant" on verse 4 it has a note that the Vatican 2066 Manuscript (from the 700s) has "the."

"And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them and 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 his image, neither had received the mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ THE THOUSAND YEARS."

In verse 4 we suggest that it is the same one thousand years as stated in verses 2 and 3. It denotes an age, the age of Christ's return and all that is included in HIS reign: The process of binding Satan and his influences, the raising of the sleeping saints — his Body members, the ongoing completion of the remaining 144,000 Body members, those to be changed at their death in the twinkling of an eye, joining the previously returned Lord and those with him in the air. (1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15, Rev. 11:15 on).

In vs. 5, the Sinaitic Manuscript and numerous other lesser manuscripts, as well as the Syriac, omit the words, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

This leaves vs 5 as follows:

"This is the first resurrection."

In vs. 6 the Sinaitic Manuscript and some other manuscripts have "the thousand years," although the Alexandrian and some others have omitted "the," implying "a."

Following the Sinaitic Manuscript, vs. 6 reads:

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and reign with him THE THOUSAND YEARS."

In vs. 7 the Sinaitic Manuscript and others have "the," although not all agree.

Once again, following the Sinaitic Manuscript, vs. 7 reads:

"And when THE THOUSAND YEARS are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

The following two renditions of these verses is a compilation of the foregoing explanations, as well as incorporating some of the Syriac.

2 “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him 3 into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till THE THOUSAND YEARS should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them and 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 his image, neither had received the mark upon their foreheads or in their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ THE THOUSAND YEARS. 5 This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and reign with him THE THOUSAND YEARS.

7 And when THE THOUSAND YEARS are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.”

Or:

2 “And he seized the dragon, the old serpent, who is the Deceiver and Satan, who seduced the whole habitable world: and he bound him A THOUSAND YEARS. 3 And he cast him into the abyss and closed and sealed upon him; so that he might deceive the nations no more, until THESE THOUSAND YEARS shall be completed; but after that, he will be loosed for a little time.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them, even the souls that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God; and these are they who had not worshipped the beast of prey, nor its image, neither had they received the mark upon their forehead or on their hand; and they lived and reigned with their Messiah THOSE THOUSAND YEARS. 5 This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; over them the second death has no dominion; they shall be, nay, are, priests of God and of his Messiah; and they will reign with him THE THOUSAND YEARS.

7 And when THESE THOUSAND YEARS shall be completed, Satan will be released from his prison:”