

## **DOCTRINE MATTERS: ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

### Message 28: **The Millennium**

**DEFINITIONS:** (from [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org))

**Eschatology:** The study of Last Things or the end time, when Christ will return.

**Second Coming:** A general reference to the final coming of Christ from heaven to earth to establish his glorious kingdom. Heb. 9:28, "So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

**Rapture:** This word is not in the Bible. But it refers to the snatching away of believers from the earth mentioned in 1 Thess. 4:17, "Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord."

**Tribulation:** A general word referring to the hardships and sufferings that God's people will always have to pass through: Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22). Let no one be moved by these afflictions. You yourselves know that this is to be our lot. (1 Thess. 3:3 -4; cf. 2 Thess. 1:4) More specifically Jesus refers to a time of "great tribulation" at the end of the age: For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. (Matt. 24:21) Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of Man . . . (Matt. 24:29f)

**Seven Years:** That the tribulation will last seven years is not a New Testament teaching. It comes from Daniel 9:24-27 where Daniel predicts "seventy weeks of years" for the accomplishment of God's redemption. The arguments are so detailed and involved we will not take the time now to sort them out. But many argue that the seventieth week of Daniel is separated from the first 69 and begins with the appearance of the antichrist or man of lawlessness. This is where the idea of a seven year tribulation comes from. The New Testament book of Revelation picks up this idea several times in its references to three and a half years (11:3; 12:6; 13:5).

**Pre-tribulational rapture:** The view that before Christ returns in glory, he will return quietly to catch up the church and take us to heaven. This happens before the tribulation, and so the view is called the PRE-tribulational rapture. This implies that the Church will not be here during the tribulation.

**Post-tribulational rapture:** The view that the rapture and the glorious second coming are part of one simultaneous event. The saints rise to meet the Lord in the air and accompany him back as the rightful king of the earth. This implies that the church will go through the tribulation on the earth.

### **WHAT IS THE MILLENNIUM?**

**Millennium:** The period of time mentioned in Revelation 20:4 during which the saints "reign with Christ a thousand years." During this time Satan is bound and thrown into a pit "that he should not deceive the nations till the thousand years are ended" (Rev. 20:3). So the millennium is marked by peace and prosperity for God's people. After this time there will appear the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13).

Although Christians agree about the fact that Christ will return, many disagree about the specific details leading up to and immediately following the return of Christ.

Specifically, they disagree over:

- the nature of the millennium...
- the relationship of Christ's return to the millennium...
- and the sequence of Christ's return and the great tribulation period that will come to earth.

The interpretation of Revelation 20, the only place in the Bible that speaks explicitly of a thousand-year reign of Christ, is made particularly difficult because it is found within a book that is filled with imagery, symbolism, and allusions to Old Testament apocalyptic texts.

Three major interpretations (views) have emerged on the nature of the millennial kingdom and its relation to the return of Christ. These views are: Amillennialism, Premillennialism, and Postmillennialism.

This is not a doctrine we should divide over. There is room for disagreement here.

Remember this statement regarding doctrine and theology: "In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity (love)."

The doctrine of the millennium is a non-essential doctrine, so there is liberty among us to disagree.

## **REVELATION 20 (ESV)**

### **The Thousand Years**

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. <sup>2</sup> And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a **thousand years**, <sup>3</sup> and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the **thousand years** were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

<sup>4</sup> Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a **thousand years**. <sup>5</sup> The rest of the dead did not come to life until the **thousand years** were ended. This is the first resurrection.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a **thousand years**.

### **The Defeat of Satan**

<sup>7</sup> And when the **thousand years** are ended, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, <sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

## Judgment Before the Great White Throne

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The Millennium is referenced 6 times in Revelation 20: v.2, v3, v4, v5, v6, v7

### WHAT WE KNOW FROM REVELATION CHAPTER 20:

- Satan is bound, thrown down, and sealed in a bottomless pit. For a thousand years, he is unable to deceive the nations.
- During that same period, either martyred or faithful Christians come to life and reign with Christ in what's called the "first resurrection."
- At the end of that time, Satan is released. He mounts a final assault against the church, and then he is overthrown and destroyed.
- The rest of the dead rise, and along with Satan, the beast, the false prophet, death, and Hades itself, they are judged before God.

### WHAT WE DON'T KNOW:

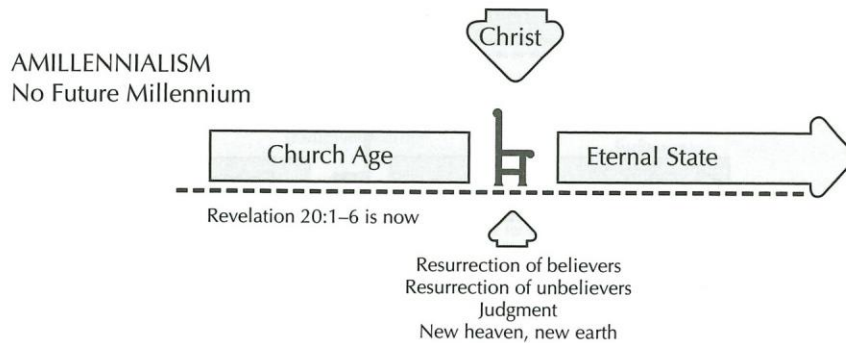
\_\_\_\_\_? When will the events of Rev. 20 happen? Is Revelation laid out chronologically or cyclically? With each passing verse, are we coming to new events that progress in time (chronologically), or are we repeating, recapping previous events that have already been described in Revelation (cyclically)? Is the millennium before Christ returns or after Christ returns?

\_\_\_\_\_? Is the millennium literally 1000 years? Or, is the millennium simply a planned, perfect, limited time?

\_\_\_\_\_? Will the millennium involve a physical resurrection of Christians to reign on earth during the millennium? Or, will the millennium involve a spiritual resurrection of Christians to reign in heaven during the millennium?

# THREE MAJOR VIEWS ON THE MILLENNIUM:

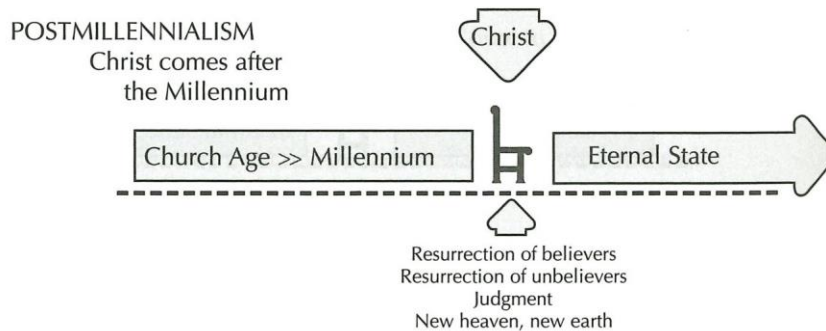
## 1. Amillennialism:



According to this position Rev. 20 describes the \_\_\_\_\_.

Amillennialists hold that Rev. 20 is being fulfilled \_\_\_\_\_, and the exact duration of this age cannot be known. This is the simplest view of the millennium because all the end time events happen at one time.

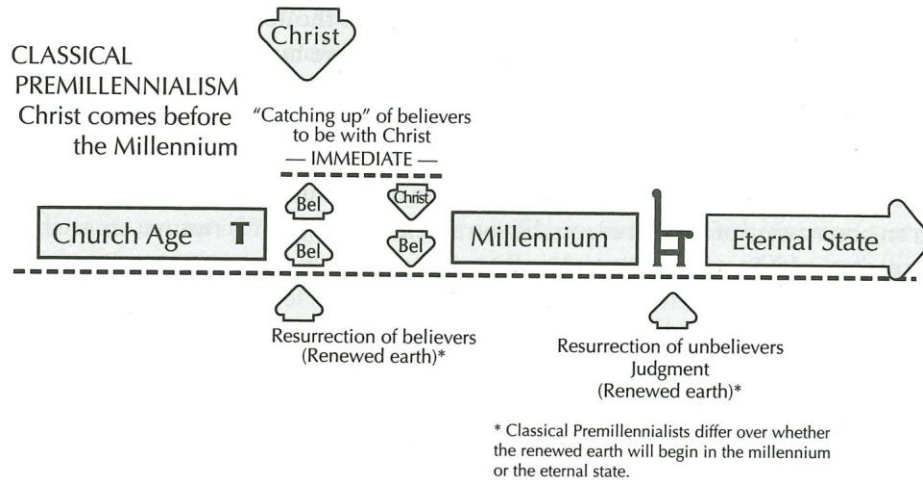
## 2. Postmillennialism:



According to this view, Christ will return \_\_\_\_\_ the millennium. The primary characteristic of postmillennialism is that it is very optimistic about the power of the gospel to change lives and bring about much good in the world. This view seems to gain popularity when the church is experiencing revival.

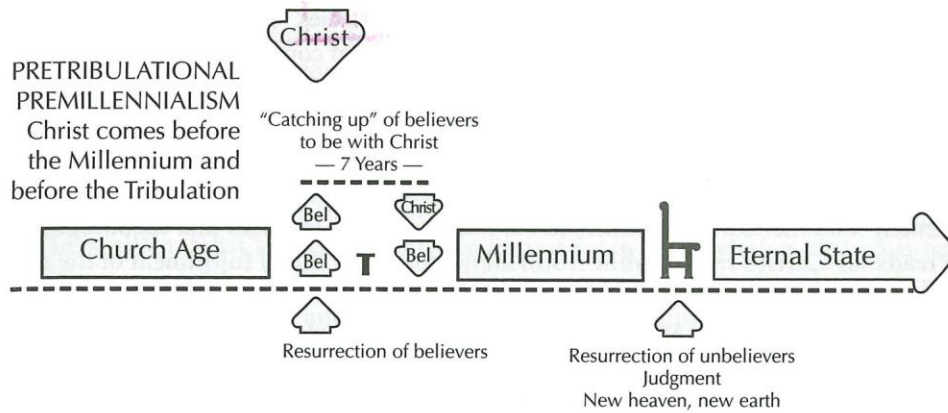
3. Premillennialism: (2 categories)

**Classic or Historic Premillennialism:**



The “premillennial” position says that Christ will come back \_\_\_\_\_ the millennium. This view seems to gain popularity when the church experiences persecution, and suffering and evil increase on earth.

**Pretribulational Premillennialism (or Dispensational Premillennialism):**



This variety of premillennialism has gained popularity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially here in the U.S. According to this view, Christ will return not only before the millennium, but also \_\_\_\_\_ the great tribulation. This view is like historical premillennialism except for one major difference: it will add another return of Christ before his return to reign on earth in the millennium.

## **BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE: LAST THINGS (Article 10)**

“God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.”

### **CONCLUSION:**

- God is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Satan is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The gospel will \_\_\_\_\_ through the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Jesus will \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_.
- At the end of history, every single one of us will be \_\_\_\_\_ by God.

All of us will stand before God’s throne one day, and books will be opened. These books in Rev. 20:12 are records of what we have done. All of our deeds will be laid out before a holy God as the basis of our judgment before Him. Two questions on that day will determine each person’s eternity.

### **1. Did you put your faith in Jesus as Lord, Savior, and Master?**

In Revelation 13:8, we see reference to “the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” This book is a reference in Revelation to everyone who has trusted in the saving work of Christ on their behalf.

#### **Romans 10:9 ESV**

“...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

#### **Romans 10:13 ESV**

“For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

#### **John 3:16 ESV**

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

## 2. Was there evidence of faith in your work?

### **Matthew 16:27 ESV**

“...The Father will repay each person according to what he has done.”

### **Romans 14:12 ESV**

“Each of us will give an account of himself to God.”

### **1 Corinthians 3:13 ESV**

“... Each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it ...”

### **2 Corinthians 5:10 ESV**

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

## **THE END:**

In the end, we all agree on one thing: \_\_\_\_\_.

The real end, the true end, is not found in the final chapters of Revelation but in Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth, chapter 15.

### **1 Cor. 15:24 ESV**

“Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.”

The end is when the Son, after bringing all things under subjection, delivers the kingdom to His Father.

### **1 Cor. 15:34 ESV**

“Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.”

### **Eph. 5:15-17 ESV**

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Jesus tells us our efforts in disciple making will lead to the end.

### **Matt. 28:18-20 ESV**

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

### **Matt. 24:14 ESV**

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

## **RECOMMENDED ESCHATOLOGY RESOURCES FROM RADICAL.NET**

### Free Online Resources:

- An Evening of Eschatology - A roundtable discussion with John Piper, Jim Hamilton, Sam Storms and Doug Wilson
- The End Times and the People of God - A series of sermons by Russell D. Moore
- Desiring God: End Times/Return of Christ - Resources from John Piper
- Enjoying God Ministries: Eschatology - Resources from Sam Storms

### Books

- Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine by Wayne Grudem
- Bible Doctrine by Wayne Grudem
- A Basic Guide to Eschatology: Making Sense of the Millennium by Millard Erickson
- The Blessed Hope: A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture by George Ladd
- The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views edited by Robert G. Clouse
- The Bible and the Future by Anthony A. Hoekema

## **REVELATION**

### Free Online Resources

- "What Are We Waiting For? - The Message of Revelation - A sermon by Mark Dever
- Desiring God: Revelation - Resources from John Piper
- Revelation - Resources from Daniel Akin
- TGC: Revelation - Resources from D.A. Carson
- Revelation Commentaries - Resources from Precept Austin
- The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation - An online book by Vern Poythress

### Poythress

- From Symbolism to Significance: The Book of Revelation - A series of sermons from the 2007 Clarus Conference featuring G.K. Beale

### Books

- The Message of Revelation by Michael Wilcock
- More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation by William Hendriksen
- Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation by Dennis Johnson
- A Commentary on the Revelation of John by George Ladd
- Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches by James M. Hamilton
- The Goldsworthy Trilogy: Gospel and Kingdom, Gospel and Wisdom, The Gospel in Revelation by Graeme Goldsworthy