

Our Blessed Hope: A Study of Biblical Eschatology

Lesson 3: The Millenium

I. Introduction: Theological Terms

“eschatology”

“millennium”

Rev. 20:1-6

II. 4 Views of the Millenium

Two Critical Questions

1) What is the _____ of the Kingdom?

2) What is the _____ of the Kingdom?

A. _____

Postmillennialists maintain Christ will return after a long period of blessing on earth, hence the prefix post, meaning “after”: Christ will come _____ the millennium. After the millennial reign, the new heaven and earth will arrive. The one thousand years are not _____ but signify a _____ period of time in which the world is transformed by the gospel.

Descriptive Features:

- 1) Christ founds his Messianic kingdom on the earth during his earthly ministry and through his redemption. His establishing the “kingdom of heaven” fulfills Old Testament prophetic expectations regarding the coming kingdom. In postmillennialism the church is the _____ / _____ Israel and is called “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16).
- 2) The kingdom’s fundamental nature is essentially _____ and _____, rather than political and corporeal. Although it has implications for the political realm, postmillennialism is not political, offering a kingdom in competition with geopolitical nations for governmental rule.
- 3) Because of the power and design of Christ’s redemption, his kingdom will exercise a _____ influence in history. This will occur as more and more people convert to Christ.
- 4) Postmillennialism expects the _____, developmental expansion of Christ’s kingdom in time and on earth before the Lord returns to end history. The ever-present Christ is directing kingdom growth from his throne in heaven, where he sits at God’s right hand.
- 5) Postmillennialism anticipates a time in earth history (continuous with the present) in which the gospel already operating will win the victory throughout the earth, _____ the Great Commission.

- 6) Postmillennialists look forward to a '_____ _____' of spiritual prosperity continuing for centuries, or even for millenniums, during which time Christianity shall be triumphant over all the earth. After this extended period of gospel prosperity, earth history will draw to a close by the return of Jesus Christ (accompanied by a literal resurrection and a general judgment) to introduce his people into the eternal form of the kingdom.

B. _____

Amillennialism literally means "no millennium," but such a label is not the best descriptor of the position. _____ millennialism is better. The thousand years in this view stand for a long period of time and do not designate a literal thousand-year reign. Amillennialists argue that the millennium began with the resurrection of Jesus and will last until the second coming. During this time, deceased believers reign spiritually with Christ in heaven in the intermediate state, awaiting their physical resurrection and the renewal of all things, and Satan is bound in the sense of being bound at the cross while the gospel goes out to the nations.

Descriptive Features:

- 1) The kingdom of God is both _____ and _____. Amillennialists believe that the kingdom of God was founded by Christ at the time of his sojourn on earth, is operative in history now and is destined to be revealed in its fullness in the life to come.
- 2) The Church Age is the kingdom which the Old Testament prophets predict. God expands his people from the one nation of Israel in the Old Testament to the **universal** Christian church of the New Testament, making this phase of God's people the "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16).
- 3) Christ **binds** Satan during his earthly ministry at his first coming. His binding prevents Satan from stopping gospel proclamation. This allows for multitudes of sinners to convert to Christ and insures some restraint upon evil.
- 4) The millennium as described in Revelation 20:4-6 refers to the _____ reign of the souls of deceased believers with Christ in heaven. The thousand-year period is not a chronologically literal piece of history; it is a _____ number coextensive with the history of the church on earth between the resurrection of Christ and his return.
- 5) There will be a parallel development of good and evil in the world which will continue until the second coming of Christ. History will witness a progressively worsening situation in which the Church of Jesus Christ will experience an increasingly widespread and oppressive time of suffering and persecution. This will culminate in the great _____, with the arising of a personal Antichrist.
- 6) The Second Coming of Christ will be a _____ event. Christ will return to end history, resurrect all men, and conduct the Final Judgment, and establish the eternal order. The eternal destiny of the redeemed will be in a totally renovated new earth.

C. _____

Premillennialists say Christ will literally return to earth _____ the millennium (hence the prefix pre) and will reign one thousand years on earth before bringing an end to everything at the end of the millennium. Most premillennialists believe the thousand years designate a _____ period of time, but such a view is not necessary for the position.

Historic premillennialists teach that at the second coming of Christ, the living saints are raptured and the dead saints are raised from the dead. All these saints are given glorified, immortal bodies. They meet Christ in the air and return to rule with Him on earth for 1000 years. This 1000-year period is one of worldwide peace and righteousness. At the end of the 1000-year period Satan is loosed from his prison to deceive the nations. Vast armies rebel and attack Christ and the saints in Jerusalem; these armies are then destroyed by fire from heaven. After the defeat of these rebel armies the final resurrection and judgment take place; then comes the eternal state.

Among premillennialists there are pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation and post-tribulation rapturists.

HISTORIC PREMILLENIALISM

Descriptive Features:

- 1) The New Testament era church is the _____ phase of Christ's kingdom, which the Old Testament anticipates especially in its prophetic books.
- 2) The New Testament church may win occasional victories in history, but ultimately she will fail in her mission, lose influence, and become corrupted as worldwide evil increases toward the end of the current era, the Church Age.
- 3) The church will pass through a future, worldwide, unprecedented time of _____. During this period a personal Antichrist will arise, possessing great religious and political power. This era is known as the great tribulation, which will punctuate the end of history.
- 4) Christ will return at the _____ of the tribulation to rapture the church, resurrect deceased saints, and conduct the judgment of the righteous in the "twinkling of an eye."
- 5) Christ then will descend to the earth with his glorified saints, fight the battle of Armageddon, bind Satan, and establish a worldwide, political kingdom, which Christ will personally administer for 1,000 years from Jerusalem.
- 6) At the end of the millennial reign, _____ will be loosed and will cause a massive rebellion against the millennial kingdom and a fierce assault against Christ and his saints.
- 7) God will intervene with fiery judgment to rescue Christ and the saints. The resurrection and the judgment of the wicked will occur and the eternal order will begin in the new heavens and new earth.

This view holds that Christ will return prior to a literal one-thousand-year reign on earth. It differs from *historic* premillennialism by its belief that prior to the tribulation, Christ will remove the church from the earth (the rapture); thus, it is also called pretribulational premillennialism.

Descriptive Features:

- 1) Christ offers renewed _____ Kingdom — an earthly, political structure — to the Jews in the first century. They reject it, leading him to postpone it until the future.
- 2) The Church Age is a wholly unforeseen and distinct era in the plan of God. It was altogether _____ to and unexpected by the Old Testament prophets.
- 3) God has a _____ and distinct program and plan for racial Israel, as distinguished from the church. The church of Jesus Christ is a parenthetical aside in the original plan of God.
- 4) The church may experience occasional small-scale successes in history, but ultimately she will lose influence, fail in her mission, and become corrupt as worldwide evil intensifies toward the end of the Church Age.
- 5) Christ will return _____ in the sky to rapture living saints and resurrect the bodies of deceased saints (the first resurrection). He is removing them out of the world _____ the great tribulation. The judgment of the saints transpires in heaven during the seven-year great tribulation period before Christ's bodily return to the earth.
- 6) At the conclusion of the seven-year great tribulation, Christ will return to the earth in order to establish and personally administer a Jewish political kingdom headquartered at Jerusalem for 1,000 years. During this time, Satan will be bound, and the temple and sacrificial system will be _____ in Jerusalem as memorials.
- 7) Toward the end of the Millennial Kingdom, _____ will be loosed so that he may surround and attack Christ at Jerusalem.
- 8) Christ will call down fire from heaven to destroy his enemies. The _____ resurrection and judgment of the wicked will occur, initiating the eternal order.

Next week: Premillennialism – Strengths and Weaknesses