

The Thousand Years—The Millennium

What is the millennium?

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. ⁴And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. ⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:1-10 (NKJV)

Introduction

Predominately the concept of a millennial reign of Christ is based on the above passage. Actually there are no other passages in the Bible that specifically refer to a 1,000 year reign of Jesus Christ. However; Isaiah has several supporting passages for a peaceful reign of Jesus Christ.

The word "Millennium" is derived from two Latin words, mille, meaning thousand, and annum, meaning year. Hence the literal meaning is a thousand years.

There are three dominate views of the millennium mentioned in Revelation 20, with many subtle variations within each of the dominant views.

A-millennialism

- This is not a literal thousand years.
- The thousand years may be fulfilled in heaven or in the age of the Church.
- Before Jesus comes, Satan will be bound. This view rejects the idea of a future millennium.

- Then will follow: the destruction of the world; the Day of Judgment; and the creation of a new earth and a new heaven.

Postmillennialism

- The thousand years will start with global gospel preaching. It will be the age of the Spirit, a time of spiritual prosperity for the Church on the earth.
- During the thousand years, there will be a great response to Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God will be established on earth.
- At the end of the thousand years Jesus Christ will return to the earth.
- Then will follow the destruction of the World, the Day of Judgment, the creation of a new earth and a new heaven.

Pre-millennialism

There are two views under this view:

Historical Pre-millennialism

- The second coming of Christ will be followed by a period of world- wide peace and righteousness, before the end of the world, and that during this "Kingdom of God", Christ will reign as King in person on this earth.
- There will be a literal kingdom on earth after the second coming of Christ but before the end of the world.
- There will not be a secret rapture or a tribulation period after the rapture. This view holds that the Christians who constitute the Church go through the Tribulation (not necessarily 7 years, no time is specified, a 7 year period is unique to Dispensational Pre-millennialism) and are exposed to its afflictions. At the end of this period, Christ comes with great power and glory to rise the righteous dead and to rapture the saints who are caught up to meet him in the air but who almost immediately return with Him as He comes to destroy Antichrist in the battle of Armageddon and establish His Kingdom.
- The coming of Christ will be preceded by certain recognizable signs, such as the preaching of the gospel to all nations, a great apostasy, wars, famines, earthquakes, the appearance of the Antichrist or Man of Sin, and the Great Tribulation.

Dispensational Pre-millennialism

- The Kingdom of God is not now in the world, and that it will not be instituted until Christ returns.
- That it is not the purpose of the present gospel age to convert the world to Christianity, but rather to preach the gospel as a witness to the nations and so to warn them of and make them justly subject to judgment; also to gather out of all nations God's elect, the Church saints.

- That the world is growing worse and will continue to grow worse until Christ comes to establish His Kingdom.
- That immediately preceding the return of Christ there is to be a period of general apostasy and wickedness.
- That we are now in the later stages of the Church age and that the return of Christ is near, probably to occur within the lifetime of the present generation.
- That at Christ's coming; the righteous dead of all ages are to be raised in the resurrection.
- That before and during the tribulation period the Jews are to be restored to the land of Palestine.
- That at the mere sight of their Messiah all the Jews are to turn to Him in a national conversion and true repentance.
- That Christ at His coming destroys the Antichrist and all his forces in the Battle of Armageddon.
- That after the battle of Armageddon Christ establishes a worldwide Kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital, in which He and the resurrected and transfigured saints rule for a thousand years in righteousness, peace and prosperity.
- That during the Millennium Satan is to be bound, cast into the abyss, and shut away from the earth.
- That at the end of the Millennium Satan is to be loosed for a short time.
- That the forces of wickedness are to be destroyed by fire which is cast down upon them from heaven.
- The wicked dead of all ages are then to be raised unto judgment and cast with the Devil and his angels into the lake of fire.
- That heaven and hell are then introduced in their fullness, with the new heavens and the new earth as the future home of the redeemed, which will constitute the future state.