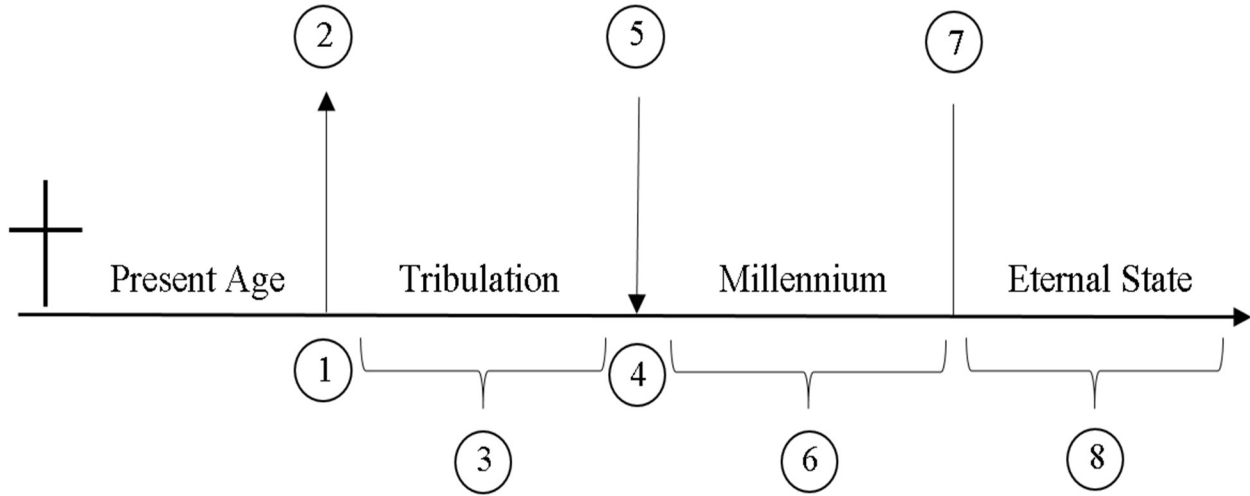


Eschatology timeline



1. The Imminent Rapture of the Church
2. The Judgment Seat of Christ
3. The Seventieth Week of Daniel
4. The Divine Restoration of Israel
5. The Second Coming of Christ
- 6. The Millennial Reign of Christ**
7. The Final Judgment of Unbelievers
8. The Final State of Eternity

The Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ

I. Introduction: Revelation 20:1-6

Kim Riddlebarger: "Revelation 20 is the most important biblical passage dealing with the subject of the millennium."¹

¹ *A Case for Amillennialism*, 195.

A. The Millennial Imprisonment of Satan (vv. 1-3)

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

1. The Angelic Descent from Heaven (v. 1)

a. The Arrival of the Angel (v. 1a)

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven”

b. The Possessions of the Angel (v. 1bc)

- The Key (v. 1b)

“holding the key of the abyss”

- The Chain (v. 1c)

“and a great chain in his hand”

2. The Angelic Action Against Satan (2-3d)

a. He Seizes Satan (v. 2a)

“And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan”

b. He Binds Satan (v. 2b)

“and bound him for a thousand years”

c. He Imprisons Satan (v. 3a)

“and he threw him into the abyss”

d. He Shuts the Abyss (v. 3b)
“and shut *it*”

e. He Seals the Abyss (v. 3c)

“and sealed *it* over him”

- The Purpose of the Imprisonment (v. 3e)

“so that he would not deceive the nations any longer”

- The Duration of the Imprisonment (v. 3f)

“until the thousand years were completed”

3. The Eventual Release of Satan (v. 3g-i)

a. The Timing of His Release (v. 3g)

“after these things”

b. The Necessity of His Release (v. 3h)

“he must be released”

c. The Duration of His Release (v. 3i)

“for a short time”

B. The Millennial Reign of Christ (vv. 4-6)

Revelation 20:4-6 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

1. The Millennial Reign of the Heavenly Armies (v. 4ab)

a. The Sitting upon Thrones (v. 4a)

“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them”

- Who are those on the thrones? Like saints from: Dan 7:27 – OT saints; Matt 19:28 – the apostles; 1 Cor 6:2, 2 Tim 2:12 – NT saints (including those who had previously been raptured, 1 Thess 4:13-17); those following Christ from heaven Zech 14:5b, Rev 19:14

b. The Reception of Authority (v. 4b)

“and judgment was given to them”

2. The Millennial Reign of the Tribulation Converts (v. 4c-k)

a. The Martyrdom of these Saints (v. 4c-h)

- The Means of their Martyrdom (v. 4c)

“And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded”

- The Reasons for their Martyrdom (v. 4d)

“because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God”

- Their Rejection of the Antichrist (v. 4e)

“and those who had not worshiped the beast”

- Their Refusal to Worship His Image (v. 4f)

“or his image”

- Their Refusal to Take His Mark (v. 4g)

“and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand”

b. The Resurrection of these Saints (v. 4h)

“and they came to life”

c. The Reign of these Saints (v. 4i)

- The King of their Reign (v. 4ia)

“and reigned with Christ”

- The Duration of their Reign (v. 4ib)

“for a thousand years.”

3. The Eventual Resurrection of the Unbelieving Dead (v. 5a)

“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.”

4. The Theological Designation of the First Resurrection (v. 5b)

“This is the first resurrection.”

5. The Holy Blessing of the First Resurrection (v. 6)

a. The Blessing (v. 6a)

“Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection”

b. Delivered from the Second Death (v. 6b)

“over these the second death has no power”

c. Privileged in the Millennial Kingdom (v. 6c-e)

- Priests of God (v. 6c)

“but they will be priests of God”

- Priests of Christ (v. 6d)

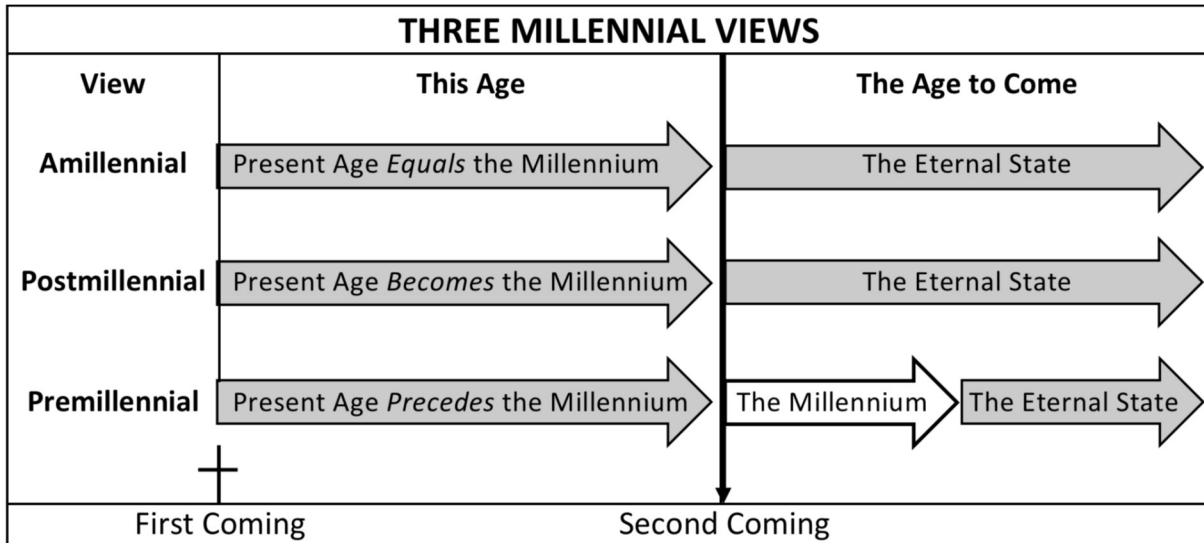
“and of Christ”

- Co-Rulers with Christ (v. 6e)

“and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

I. The Timing of the Millennial Kingdom (3 Views)

- **Amillennialism:** there is _____ (“a-”) future millennium yet to come
 - The MK takes place between the two comings of Christ as He rules over His church, in the hearts of His people, or with the saints in heaven.
 - The present age *is* the millennial kingdom (“realized millennialism”).
- **Postmillennialism:** Christ will return _____ (“post-”) the millennium
 - The MK is progressively established in the present age as the gospel goes forth with increasing success until most of the world is converted.
 - The present age *is becoming* the millennial kingdom.
- **Premillennialism:** Christ will return _____ (“pre-”) the millennium
 - The MK will be established on earth when Jesus returns in glory, constituting an intermediate kingdom between the present age and eternal state.
 - The present age *precedes* the millennial kingdom.



A. Amillennialism

- Amillennialism is the view that there will be *no* (“a-”) future millennial reign of Christ on earth.

1. The Historical Development of Amillennialism

- a. Premillennialism was the dominant view in the first three centuries of the church.
 - Embraced by fathers such as Papias (60-135), Barnabas (100-150), Justin Martyr (100-165), Irenaeus (130-202), Tertullian (160-220), Hippolytus (185-236), Commodianus (3rd century), Cyprian (200-250), Methodius 257 (?-311), and Lactantius (240-320).
 - Papias’ premillennialism is especially notable since he was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John (who wrote Revelation 20).
- b. Early church leader, Origen (185-254), later popularized the allegorical approach to interpreting Scripture and thereby laid a hermeneutical foundation for the eventual emergence of amillennial eschatology.
- c. Origen’s influence brought in a spiritualizing and allegorizing of texts.
- d. Premillennialism was increasingly challenged in the late third and early fourth centuries by men such as Eusebius (270-340), Tyconius (379-423), and Jerome (347-420), but Augustine (354-430) – often known as the “Father of Amillennialism” – popularized amillennialism so that it became the accepted view of the church by the middle of the fourth century.

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- Martin Erdmann, *The Millennial Controversy in the Early Church*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005.
- Nathan Busenitz, “Did the Early Church Believe in a Literal Millennial Kingdom?” in *Christ’s Prophetic Plans: A Futuristic Premillennial Primer*, eds. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, pp. 177-95. Chicago: Moody, 2012.

2. The Main Beliefs of Amillennialism

- a. The millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 was inaugurated at the cross and is being fulfilled spiritually in the present age – between the two comings of Christ – as He rules over His church, in the hearts of His people, or with the saints in heaven.
- b. During the thousand years – which is understood as a symbolic reference to a long indefinite period of time – Satan’s activities are restricted so that the Gospel can go forth to the nations, but he is still active and influential on earth.
- c. The conflict between good and evil will intensify toward the end of the millennial reign of Christ, and the increasing persecution will culminate in the appearance of the antichrist and the Second Coming of Jesus at the end of the present age.
- d. d. When Christ returns, there will be a general resurrection and judgment of both believers and unbelievers, after which both will be ushered into the eternal state, the former into the new heavens and earth and the latter into the lake of fire.

3. The Primary Weaknesses of Amillennialism

- a. An Unsound Hermeneutical Approach
 - i. Its Denial of the Perspicuity of the Old Testament
 - ii. Its Use of the Two-Age Model as an Interpretive Grid
 - iii. Its Inconsistency in the Use of the grammatical-historical Hermeneutic
 - OT prophecies concerning land, the future temple, and future physical & national prosperity to ethnic Israelites, are said to be fulfilled in the church, spiritually
 - Problem: Many OT prophecies have already been fulfilled in a literal way (Christ born in Bethlehem, Mic 5:2; born of a virgin, Isa 7:14; in the line of David, Isa 9:7; healing of the blind and paralyzed, Isa 35:5-6). This would suggest that other remaining OT prophecies, which await fulfillment (e.g. concerning the prosperity of regenerate Israel’s future), will be fulfilled literally, just like other OT prophecies.

b. A Misinterpretation of Key OT Passages

E.g. Isaiah 2:2-4 Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

***See previous Entrust lessons, The Divine Restoration of Israel and the Covenants, and The Salvation of All Israel in Rom 11:26*

c. An Untenable Interpretation of Revelation 20

- i. Denies the Chronological Relationship of Revelation 19-20
- ii. Requires a Partial Binding in Revelation 20:1-3
- iii. Requires a Spiritual Resurrection in Revelation 20:4-6
- iv. Requires a Symbolic Interpretation of the Thousand Years

Revelation 20 and the Millennial Debate

I. Introduction: The Millennial Significance of Revelation 20

- **A straightforward, plain-sense reading of Revelation 19–22 yields the following:**

Second Coming → **Millennial Kingdom** → **The Eternal State**
(Rev 19) (Rev 20) (Rev 21–22)

A. The Amillennial View of Revelation 20

- The millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 was inaugurated at the cross and is being fulfilled spiritually in the present age – between the two comings of Christ – as He rules over His church, in the hearts of His people, or with the saints in heaven.

B. Key Exegetical Questions in Revelation 20

- Is the duration of the millennium symbolic or literal?
 - There is nothing in Rev 20 which suggests that “1000,” mentioned 6 times, should be taken symbolically. And, whenever the word “year” is used w/a number in Scripture, it’s meaning is always literal.
- Is the binding of Satan present or future?
- Is the “first resurrection” spiritual or physical?
- Is the chronology of John’s visions recapitulatory or sequential?

EXEGETICAL ISSUE	Amillennialism	Premillennialism
➤ Duration of Millennium:	Symbolic	Literal*
➤ Timing of Satan’s Binding:	Present	Future
➤ Nature of First Resurrection:	Spiritual	Physical
➤ Chronology of Visions:	Recapitulatory	Sequential