

The Millennium and The End of the World – Part 1

www.BLC7500.com

Millennium Basics:

1. **Definition:**

- a. A Millennium: A period of 1,000 years – it can be a *literal* 1,000 years **or** a *symbolical* 1,000 years – a complete period, for example, **from Jesus first coming to His second coming**.
- b. Two basic Millennial beliefs: ➔ *It's literal and yet to come*; ➔ *It's symbolic and now*.
- c. Timing and nature of the Millennium: The exact *timing* and *nature* of what is meant by the Millennium is debated between three basic interpretations of Scripture:
 - i. **Premillennialism**
 - ii. **Postmillennialism**
 - iii. **Amillennialism**

2. **Terminology:** “Each term is distinguished by a prefix attached to the word “millennium,” which is a compound of two Latin terms, mille [mee'-lay] (thousand), and annus (year). Over time, each view began to be known by its interpretation of [Revelation 20:1-10](#), particularly the timing of the return of Christ with reference to the period of 1,000 years.¹

- a. **Premillennialists** believe Christ returns **before the millennium** [*before the literal 1,000 years*] (“pre” means “before”), which will be preceded by a period of intense tribulation.
- b. **Postmillennialists** believe Christ returns **after the millennium** [*after the literal 1,000 years*] (“post” means “after”), which will be a golden age when most of the world has converted to Christianity.
- c. **Amillennialists** expect **no millennium** (The prefix – “a” means, “no”), no future literal 1,000 years but rather view it as Christ's reign with his saints during the time between his two comings.

3. **Summary:**

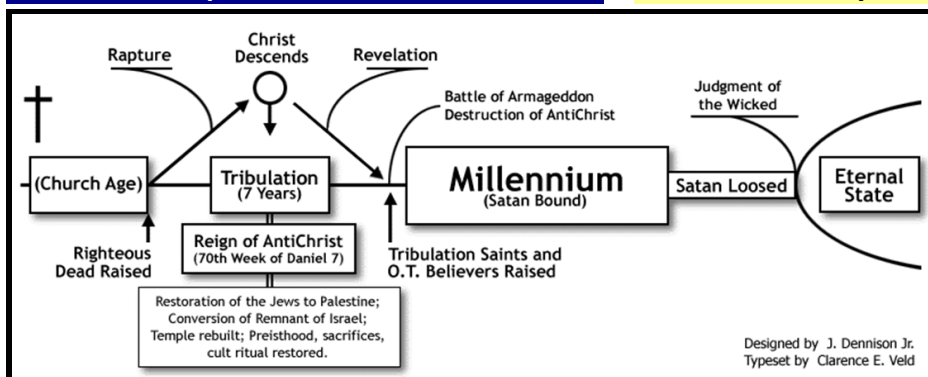
- a. The Millennium refers to the period of the 1,000-year reign of Christ mentioned in [Revelation 20:1-6](#): That passage is [especially] difficult to interpret and has been the source of debate among the three eschatological schools of thought (Ibid.).
- b. What is eschatology? It comes from the Greek word, ἔσχατος (escatos), which means “last” or “final” things. So, eschatology is **the study of the last or final things**. “It is the study of Christ's future return, the resurrection, the rapture [*which we will come to later in this study*], the final judgment, the eternal blessedness of the redeemed with Christ, and the eternal punishment of the damned apart from his presence” (Ibid.).

4. **Four Views of the Millennium:**

- a. Regarding Premillennialism, there are two views: ♦ Dispensational Premillennialism and ♦ Historic Premillennialism.
- b. Page 2 has diagrams of the four views and the denominations that believe them.

¹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/views-of-the-millennium/>

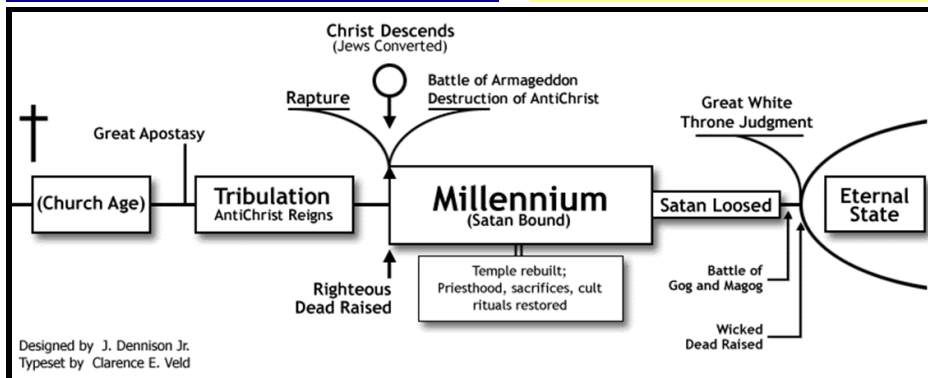
View One – Dispensational Premillennialism² – The literal 1,000 years is yet to come!



Denominations

Assemblies of God
Some Baptists
Pentecostals

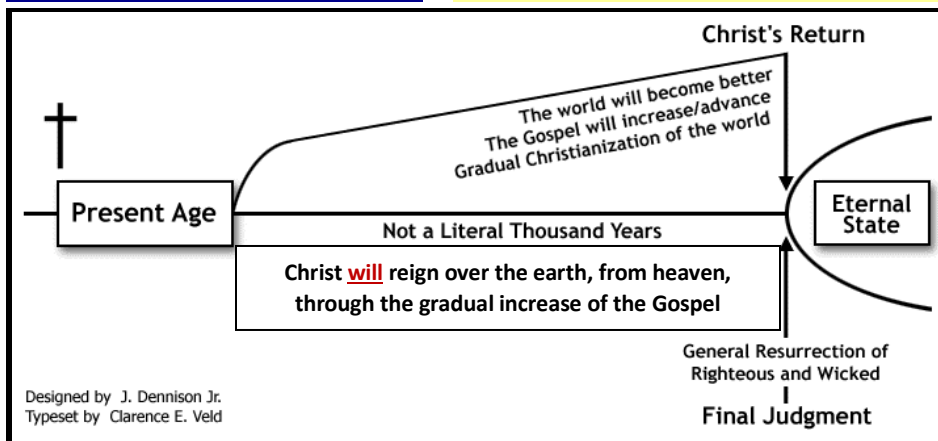
View Two – Historic Premillennialism – The literal 1,000 years is yet to come!



Denominations

Some Baptists
Presbyterians
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Several Evangelical Groups

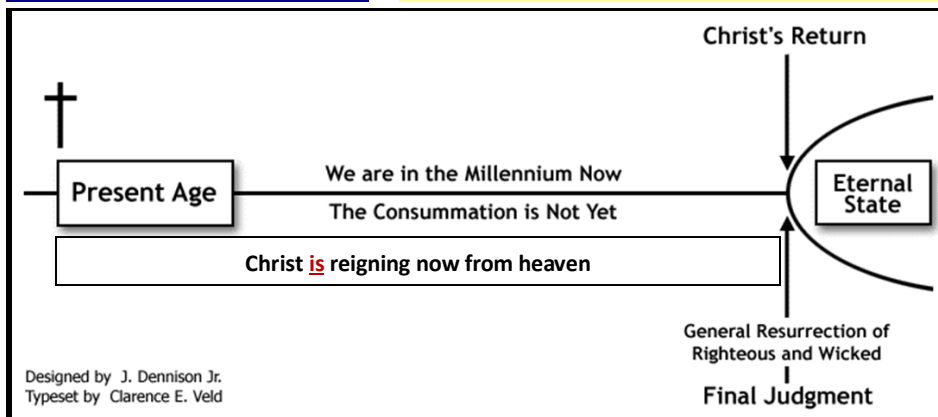
View Three – Postmillennialism – The symbolic 1,000 years (the complete era) is yet to come!



Denominations

Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism
Adventist Church of Promise
Disciples of Christ (Campbell Movement)
American Presbyterian Church

View Four – Amillennialism – The symbolic 1,000 years (the complete era) is now!



Denominations

Eastern and Oriental Orthodox
Roman Catholic
Lutheran; Reformed
Anglican; Methodist
Messianic Jews

² The images and some of the contents of this study are from this site: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/fag/mill.cfm>

Bible References to a Thousand Years

- The LORD is not bound by time:
 - **Psalms 90:4** For a thousand years in Your sight Are like yesterday when it passes by, Or as a watch in the night.
 - **2 Peter 3:8** But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.
- All bodies will eventually go to the grave: **Ecclesiastes 6:6** “Even if the other man lives a thousand years twice and does not enjoy good things-- do not all go to one place?”
- These are the other references to 1,000 years: **Revelation 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7**

Millennium History – Brief Summary (based on AI)

- “The concept of a pre-tribulation Rapture, where believers are taken to heaven before a period of tribulation, is a relatively modern theological idea, primarily developed in the 19th century. The early Christian Church, from the 1st to 4th centuries, did not explicitly teach or document a belief in a pre-tribulation Rapture as it is understood today.”
- “Early Christian writings... focused on eschatological themes like the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment. These writings often described a single, visible return of Christ to judge the world, with believers enduring persecution and tribulation until that event.”
- Tertulian may be an early Christian writer who did believe in a coming literal Millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Popularity of the Views: The January 2011 Evangelical Leaders Survey showed:³

- 65 percent identify with premillennial theology.
- 4 percent with postmillennial theology.
- 13 percent with amillennial theology.
- 18 percent with other theology.

Which of the four is the Lutheran category?

- ☐ Pre
- ☐ Post
- ☐ A
- ☐ Other

The Key Passage – Revelation 20:1-10: It includes six references to a “thousand years.” Let’s try to better understand this difficult section of Scripture as we focus on vv. 1-6.

Satan is Bound – Revelation 20:1-3

1. ¹ ~~Then~~ [And] I saw an angel [our Lord Jesus Christ] coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.
 - a. **Revelation 1:18** – Jesus said: “I have the keys of death and of Hades.”
 - b. **Jude 6** – “[Evil angels are] kept in eternal bonds... for the judgment of the great day...”
2. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him [with something functioning as a chain – since an angel could not be bound by a literal chain] 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 [the unbelieving Gentiles] any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must [δεῖ] be released for a short time.

³ <https://www.nae.org/premillennialism-reigns-in-evangelical-theology/>

- a. Satan's binding – It happened with Jesus' first coming, *especially with His ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension.*
- b. Satan's period of being bound: “for a thousand years,” which symbolizes a complete period (*from his binding to his loosing*). The number 10 in Revelation is the number for completeness; 10x10x10 is a very complete period.
- c. Satan's limits while bound – *like a dog on a chain*. In [Revelation 13](#), Satan does his work of lying, deceiving, and murdering through beast 1 and beast 2.
 - i. Beast 1: The devil works through secular governments in various ways: the Roman Empire, the system of Islam, and even the U. S. government, which has passed many laws against God's Word, school prayer, and life itself!
 - ii. Beast 2: The devil works through the false representatives of God's word, who support the anti-God ways of secular government. The devil works through many religions, even many Christian denominations, to ultimately lead us away from our Savior!
 - iii. For more on the two beasts – see my [Revelation 13:1-18 sermon](#).
- d. Satan's influence on the gospel: Consider this comparison between the OT and the NT:
 - i. In the OT era, when Satan was free, the gospel was limited.
 - ii. In the NT era, when Satan was bound, the gospel had more freedom.
 - iii. Dr. Becker made this comment about the NT era: “So long as the gospel is preached to the nations, the devil will be hindered in his attempt to deceive the nations. The more widely and the more purely the gospel is proclaimed, the shorter Satan's chain becomes” (298).
- e. Satan's release – It will happen at the end of the complete period. Then Satan will be free to deceive the nations. Regarding that time, Jesus said: [Matthew 24:22, 24](#) “Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.... false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”
- f. Satan's current situation: Some believe we are currently living in the “short time.” Why? Many churches today teach and/or practice the following:
 - i. The Bible *contains* God's word.
 - ii. God used *evolution* to create the world.
 - iii. The way to heaven is by *faith + works* (believing something + doing our best).
 - iv. Right and wrong are *not absolute*, but relative (whatever feels right is okay).
 - v. Abortion and homosexuality are *acceptable to God*.
- g. Passages that point to Satan being free:
 - i. [2 Timothy 3:1-5](#) But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ² For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

- ii. **2 Timothy 4:3-4** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Christians Reign with Christ – Revelation 20:4-6

3. ⁴ ~~Then~~ [And] 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 [**lived**] [*aorist active*] and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
 - a. Believers are reigning with Christ – Notice in verse 4 who are seated on thrones: Christians who were beheaded / martyred and others who did not worship the beast!
 - b. Be careful – It's **NOT** that *they were dead AND came to life* – like many wrongly believe who envision a 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ. Instead, *as soon as their bodies died in Christ*, their souls continued to live, and they **are** reigning with Christ! Jesus said: “...everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die” (John 11:26).
 - c. Comfort – Try to imagine your loved one being arrested and killed *because of his or her testimony of Jesus*. That could bring great despair **but** knowing that your loved one is *reigning with Christ* should bring great comfort. Read Dr. Becker's quote, page 308.
4. ⁵ The rest of the dead [*those who died without Christ*] 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 [*literally – is continuing to have*] [*present participle*] 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 [*until Jesus returns*].
 - a. The first death (spiritual) – We all began with physical life, *but also with spiritual death*: **Ephesians 2:1** “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...”
 - b. The first resurrection (spiritual) – That is when God united us to Christ, *thus raising us from spiritual death “and seated [not will seat] us with Him in the heavenly places”* (Eph. 2:4-6)! The first resurrection continues as we reign with Christ *between our physical death and His return*!
 - c. The second resurrection (body, soul, spirit) – That is when Jesus returns and raises all bodies – *both believers and unbelievers*, and restores each person to body, soul, and spirit.
 - i. **John 5:28** “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which **all** who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹ and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.”
 - ii. **Acts 24:15** “...there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.” (“a resurrection” – *not three resurrections per Premillennialism*)
 - d. The second death (body, soul, spirit) – *Eternal punishment*; it has no power over us; we *are God's forgiven children*!

What About the Rapture:

1. Amillennial position: The events of **1 Thessalonians 4** will happen at the end of the world.
2. Dispensational Premillennial position:
 - a. “The Rapture, in a Christian context, refers to the belief that at the Second Coming of Jesus, all believers, both living and dead, will be gathered up to meet him in the air and be taken to heaven. This is often viewed as a distinct event before the establishment of Jesus' millennial kingdom and the great tribulation (AI).
 - b. “...primarily associated with various Protestant denominations, particularly those within the evangelical and fundamentalist traditions. Specific denominations include Baptist churches, Bible churches, Brethren churches, certain Methodist denominations, Pentecostal churches, and non-denominational evangelicals” (AI).
3. The key Bible reference: **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** – Why did Paul write this section? The Christians in Thessalonica were concerned that those who died before Jesus returned would be forgotten. *The comments below align with the Amillennial position.*
 - a. **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God...** // Jesus' Return at the end of the world.
 - b. **...and the dead in Christ will rise first.** // Those who died in Christ will be raised and transformed from mortal to immortal (**1Co. 15**).
 - c. **¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will 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.** // The bodies of living Christians will be transformed second.
4. The source of – **caught up**: It is a translation of the Greek term, ἀρπάζω, into English. It means to **take away, seize** (Danker, BW).
5. The source of – **rapture**: It is translation of the Greek term, ἀρπάζω, into Latin, ra-pie'mur.
6. All people will know when the events of **1 Thessalonians 4** take place:
 - a. **Luke 17:24** “For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.”
 - b. **Revelation 1:7** BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him...
7. There are only two comings: **Hebrews 9:27-28** And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, so Christ also, having been offered **once to bear the sins of many**, will appear **a second time for salvation** without *reference to* sin, to those who eagerly await Him. // **Philippians 3:20** describes the eager waiting of believers!
8. The second coming of Christ: **1 Corinthians 15:51-54** Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep [physically die], but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last trumpet**; for the trumpet will sound, and **the dead will be raised imperishable**, and we [who are alive] will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.”
9. When will Jesus raise each believer? **John 6:40** “I Myself will raise him up **on the last day**.” // Who will be raised on the last day? See **John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15**.