

## Topic: The Millennium

### Introduction:

*The Major point of Revelation 20 is that the Devil and all his angels will be defeated, and that God takes care of His saints and blesses them through His Glorious triumphant. This assurance ought to comfort Christians, whatever their millennium view is.*

### The Outline:

1. Text: Revelation 20:1-6
2. Views
3. History
4. Exegesis

### The Text:

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 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. 4 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. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 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 Views: Show the simple Millennium diagram

- **Historic Premillennialism**—believes in an earthly millennial kingdom set up after the return of Christ and including all of God's people, both Jews and Gentiles.
- **Dispensational Premillennialism**—believes in an earthly millennial kingdom set up after the return of Christ in which Christ rules over the re-established theocracy of Israel.
- **Postmillennialism**—believes that the millennium will be a time of the triumph of the Gospel, a substantial Christianization of the world, before the return of Christ. The millennium is either coextensive with the present age or it begins sometime during the present age.

- **Amillennialism**—believes the millennium of Rev. 20 is the present, heavenly reign of Christ and the saints, spanning the period of time from Christ's first coming to shortly before his second coming. It should be noted that many postmillennialists would also endorse this understanding.

### The History:

*While there are many different, yet defensible, views regarding many aspects of end-time message, the basic divergence – that denies a literal Millennium - is dangerous in that it would appear to be an attack on the very character of God!*

### Millennium Statistics:

The Bible is replete with commitments for a literal ultimate rule of Christ on earth in a literal sense from a literal Jerusalem.

- 1,845 references
- 17 books give it prominence
- Rabbinical aspirations were dominated by it
- 318 references in the NT
- 216 chapters
- 23 from 27 books give prominence to this event
- Early Church longed for this event (Blessed Hope)

So how and where did this scepticism called “**AMILLENNIALISM**” begin?

We know that the Early Church Fathers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century (Justin Martyr<sup>1</sup> and Papias<sup>2</sup>) held to a literal view of the Millennium.

**Origen** (3<sup>rd</sup> Century) a great Theologian but sadly an extreme allegorist of Scripture

**Augustine**<sup>3</sup> another great Theologian but heavily influenced by Origen

Quote: Chuck Missler (on Augustine)

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<sup>1</sup> *St. Justin Martyr (ca. 100-ca. 165) is the first Christian apologist of non-Jewish heritage whose writings have survived.*

<sup>2</sup> fl. A.D. 130, early Christian theologian said to have been bishop of Hieropolis and a friend of St. [Polycarp](#). Papias' five-volume work, *Oracles; or, Explanations of the Sayings of the Lord*, survives only in fragments quoted by Eusebius of Caesarea and St. Irenaeus. These are valuable sources for the history of the church.

<sup>3</sup> *Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo (A.D. 354-430), was one of the most influential leaders of the Western church, living during the turbulent days of the disintegration of the Roman Empire.*

### The Reformation Shortfall

A thousand years later, under the influence of Martin Luther and others there was an intense return to the authority of the Bible and in particular to “Salvation through Faith” but the weakness was their failure to re-examine the eschatology of the Medieval Church in the light of God’s Word.

*Although his writings effectively defeated a number of heresies emerging in those turbulent times, the allegorizing influences of Origen left an Amillennial eschatology in their wake. As the Church had increasingly become an instrument of the state, it wasn't politically expedient to look toward a literal return of Christ to rid the world of its evil rulers! The allegorical reposturing of those passages was more "politically correct."*

Some people go as far as to say that the Origen allegorization institutionized by Augustine led to the Holocaust tragedy. Why because it denies God's literal dealings with Israel (Romans 9-11), which led to a Theology known as "Replacement Theology", where God replaces Israel in his program.

### **Show the "In God's Economy Diagram" from CJ's City**

#### **Personal Testimony**

##### ***A time to study:***

*It took me some serious study of Romans for my Amillennial view to change two years ago, I had to re-examine my Theology in the light of Scripture rather than Western Doctrines, and my most cherished presumptions were utterly shaken.*

*It is important to understand that there should be no break between chapters 19 and 20<sup>4</sup>. This account moves seamlessly to those events, which follow the return of the Lord in the Original Greek.*

In the flow of the original text we see the events of chapter 19--the appearance of the Rider on a white horse, along with His heavenly armies.

*And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, **and bound him for a thousand years**. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the **thousand years were ended**. After that, he must be set free for a short time. 20:1-3*

**1000 years** appears 2 times in this passage and a total of six times in Revelation 20.

The word "**MILLENNIUM**" comes from two Latin words, mille annum, meaning "**a thousand years.**"

It is this passage that teaches clearly and unambiguously about the Millennium of peace that lies in our future, beyond the seven years of tribulation, beyond the great final Battle of Armageddon.

#### **A Doctrinal Battleground**

Revelation 20 should be taken literally to believe that Christ would set up His kingdom for a thousand years upon the earth. Such an event would be the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies concerning the reign of the Messiah upon the earth.

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<sup>4</sup> The Chapter and Verse divisions were devised by Archbishop Stephen Langton (13<sup>th</sup> Century)

A quick glance at the headlines is enough to make you scratch your head over the claim that Christ's Millennium has been and is now. As someone once remarked, *"If Satan is bound today, it must be with a very long chain!"*

Now, it is true in one sense that Jesus overpowered and bound Satan at the cross.

As Paul writes, *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."*<sup>5</sup>

So Satan is bound--yet in a *limited* way.

- He is restrained from attacking and controlling those who are protected by faith in Christ and His sacrifice on the cross.
- Satan is still the god of this world.
- He is still the strong man who counts among his possessions the majority of the human race.
- He is still the prince of the power of the air.

### **Into the Abyss<sup>6</sup>**

But there are profound differences between the manner in which Satan was bound at the cross and the way he is bound in this passage in Revelation.

1) Notice first that the binding of Satan in Revelation 20 makes no reference to the cross, but instead follows immediately the Second Coming of Christ.

In context, we see the visible appearance of Christ in His glory and triumph (19), followed by the binding of Satan and his consignment to the Abyss (20).

2) Second, notice that, Jesus does not do the binding of Satan. A great angel--possibly the archangel Michael, does it.

The angel first binds Satan with a great chain (metaphoric, symbolizing Satan's restraint, a spiritual reality).

In the Millennium Satan's power and ability to function is limited big time.

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<sup>5</sup> Colossians 2:5

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- 1) Bottomless
- 2) Unbounded
- 3) The abyss

a) The pit

b) The immeasurable depth

c) Of Orcus, a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth used as the common receptacle of the dead and especially as the abode of demons

Satan is not only restrained he is also thrown into the bottomless pit (the abyss), which is then locked and sealed, an indication that Satan is totally removed from the earth for a thousand years.

3) Third, the angel shuts and locks the door to the Abyss. It cannot be opened from the inside. It is a sealed prison. Even a demon on a very long chain could not escape from it to work his mischief in the world.

4) Fourth, the angel seals the door of the Abyss so that it cannot even be opened from the outside.

No power--not even a power standing outside of the Abyss--may open it and release Satan during his thousand-year imprisonment. He has been arrested and jailed without possibility of parole.

And what about demons, the rest of Satan's army, the ones Paul calls "**wicked spirits in heavenly places**"? **Eph.6: 12**<sup>7</sup>

Isaiah indicates that Satan and his angels are removed from activity on the earth. It is a complete exile from which there is no escape for a thousand years. Demons will be banned from the face of the earth for a full thousand years.

### **"A Thousand Years"**

- 6 times in this chapter
- If God meant to say "Indefinite periods of time" He would have stated as such
- It is stated so plainly and repetitiously as if to settle any future disputes

The reason why Satan is bound for a thousand years:

***"To keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years are ended"***

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<sup>7</sup> Where will they be during the Millennium? John's vision doesn't say, but the question is answered for us in Isaiah 24, a chapter that is often called "The Little Apocalypse." The prophet writes:

In that day the LORD will punish  
The powers in the heavens above  
And the kings on the earth below.<sup>6</sup>

We have already seen the punishment of the kings on the earth. This was accomplished in Revelation 19:17-21 when the Lord and His armies arrived and destroyed them. Isaiah continues:

They will be herded together  
Like prisoners bound in a dungeon;  
They will be shut up in prison  
And be punished after many days.  
The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed;  
For the LORD Almighty will reign  
On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,  
And before its elders, gloriously.<sup>7</sup>

## Our Current State:

The lies of Satan hold the nations spellbound.

- The world is captivated by drugs, by the wrongful use of sexuality, by the lust for power, by the lust for money, by the lust for status and fame.
- These lies have been poured into human ears from unseen powers since the first man and the first woman walked the earth.
- The record of human history is a record of the deceitfulness of Satan.
- But during the 1000yr reign of Christ while Satan is in the Abyss, all of his deceptions will cease and the world will rest in peace.
- The human race will at last be free of the "bedevilment" of satanic influence.

## The Rule of the Saints

Next John gives us an exhilarating view of one of the most sublime aspects of the Millennium for you and me: as saints, *we will reign with Christ.*

*20:4-6 | I saw thrones on which were seated **those who had been given authority to judge.** And I saw the souls of **those who had been beheaded** because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*

Notice the three different groups that are mentioned in this passage.

### 1. "THOSE WHO HAD BEEN GIVEN AUTHORITY TO JUDGE."

Who are they?

*"I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19:28<sup>8</sup>*

So we see here that it's the 12 Disciples judging a restored Nation of Israel.

But the twelve disciples are not the only ones who will be judges during the thousand-year reign of Christ.

### 2. THE OVERCOMERS

At the beginning of this vision, Jesus told the believers at Thyatira that all "**OVER-COMERS**" will rule with Christ during the Millennium:

*To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--  
"He will rule them with an iron scepter;  
He will dash them to pieces like pottery." Revelation 3:21-22<sup>9</sup>*

The believers of this present age will be allied with Christ during His thousand-year reign over the nations.

That is why Paul said to the Corinthians, "**Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?**" And further, "**Do you not know that we will judge angels?**"<sup>10</sup>

His point to the Corinthians was that the saints who will someday judge angels and nations.

### 3. The Martyrs of the Tribulation

*"Those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands."*

The same group as seen in Revelation 6-7

The Believers who lost their lives in the persecution of the Tribulation, yet who never lost their faith and witness for Jesus Christ.

They refused to bow before the Antichrist--and they paid the ultimate sacrifice for their faithfulness to God. **They, too, will live again and reign with Christ for a thousand years.**

#### **But the Dead Unbelievers will not!**

They do not reign with Christ during the Millennium. Of them John simply says, "**The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.**"

They will appear before the Great White Throne judgment at the end of Revelation 20.

John concludes his description of these three groups--**the saints who return with Christ at His coming, the saints who died in the Tribulation** and are raised to life, and the unbelieving dead--with the words,

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection."

**Those who reign with Christ are those who take part in the first resurrection.**

#### **The 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection**

An implication that a 2<sup>nd</sup> automatically will follow

Amillennialists believe in only one resurrection coming at the end of History<sup>8</sup>, which is not what Revelation 20 teaches.

Of course, that view creates a problem since this passage says there is a first resurrection and that "the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended."

1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection to the Amillennialists is the resurrection of the incorporeal (intangible or ethereal) spirit or soul, not a resurrection of the body, but Christ's resurrection was literal and physical, the word literally means "**to stand up again**" as our Dutch friends would say: "**oopstanding**" Only a body can literally stand up.

A close exegesis of the word in Scripture always refers to the resurrection of the body. In light of these facts, the conclusion seems inescapable: "the first resurrection" is a literal resurrection of the bodies of the dead in Christ.

It is clear in Scripture that there are two resurrections taught.

Jesus Himself referred to a "RESURRECTION OF LIFE" and a "RESURRECTION OF JUDGMENT."<sup>13</sup> The first is for those who believe in Christ.

That is why John says, "*Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.*"

- Lloyd 2 weeks ago we saw that the Satanic Rebellion was crushed
- Joseph last week the Great White Throne

Now let us finish where we started:

*Conclusion:*

*The Major point of Revelation 20 is that the Devil and all his angels will be defeated, and that God takes care of His saints and blesses them through His Glorious triumphant. This assurance ought to comfort Christians, whatever their millennium view is.*

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<sup>8</sup> It comes, they believe, at the very end of history, and it therefore must be associated with the Great White Throne judgment. They say it will be one resurrection and one judgment involving both the righteous and the wicked dead.