

Revelation

Lesson 37 – Revelation 20:1-10

- “You would think the millennium is mentioned in every book of the Bible, given its amount of discussion. As symbolized by the number 1,000, the millennium is not mentioned beyond this chapter.” –Dr. Michael Kruger

Various Views

1. **Historic Premillennialism:** Christ returns prior (pre) to the millennium and establishes His reign on the earth for 1000 literal years. However, there's not a return to Jewish institutions such as Temple, sacrifices, or Davidic monarchy. Proponents of this view are Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, GE Ladd, Robert Mounce, James Montgomery Boice.

Cross 2nd Coming Final Consummation

+ | 1000 yrs on earth |

-----→eternity

The problem with this view is no Scripture text divides the 2nd Coming and Final Consummation. These 2 things appear together in the Gospels and here throughout Revelation.

2. **Dispensational Premillennialism:** Christ returns prior (pre) to the millennium and establishes His reign on the earth for 1000 literal years. However, before this happens, the Church is secretly raptured into heaven, followed by a 7 year tribulation in which Jews and others are converted to Christ. But the big deal for this view is that the millennium is for a restored Israel. The millennium will look like the Old Testament with a Davidic king reigning in the Temple with restored animal sacrifices. Proponents of this view are John Nelson Darby, CI Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, Jerry Falwell, Charles Stanley, John Hagee, John MacArthur, Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye.

Cross Rapture 2nd Coming Final Consummation

+ | 7yr trib | 1000 yrs on earth |

-----→eternity

The problem with this view is the rapture texts in Scripture occur at the 2nd coming and again, no text divides the 2nd coming from the Final Consummation. Scripturally speaking, the rapture/2nd Coming/Final Consummation all occur together. Also, there's no idea in Scripture of a 2nd chance for those “left behind” to become saved.

3. **Postmillennialism:** Christ returns after (post) the millennium. The millennium begins when Satan is bound and there is a “golden age” of Christianity, so that almost the entire earth is Christianized and becomes the Kingdom of Christ through the spread of the Gospel. The 1000 year reign takes place in Heaven, at the right hand of the Father, and is symbolic for a long period of time. In this view, **things get progressively better**. Proponents of this view are Jonathan Edwards, Charles Hodge, Martin Luther, BB Warfield, Calvin (arguably), Gary DeMar.

Cross Satan bound 2nd Coming/Final Consummation

+ | “1000 yrs” in heaven |

-----→eternity

The problem with this view is they can't agree on when Satan is bound, but most put the binding of Satan at some point after the cross. It may have already happened or it may be still to come.

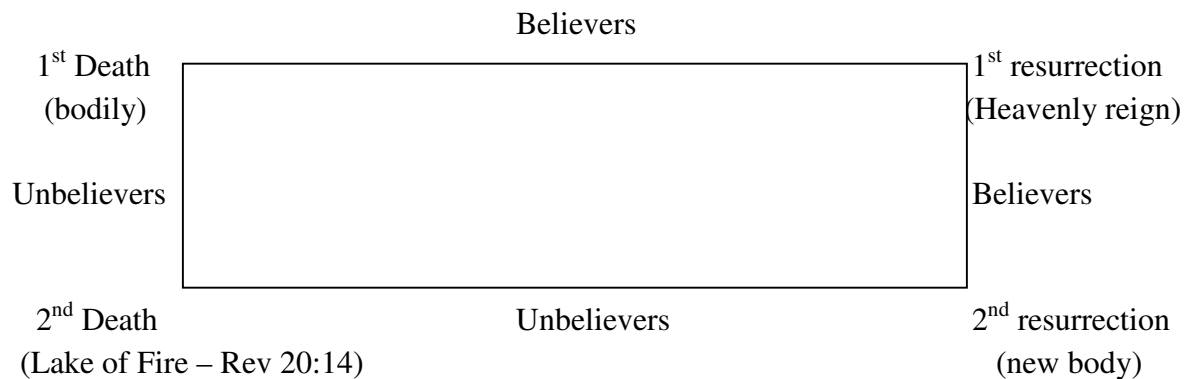
4. **Amillennialism:** Christ returns after the millennium, which is the period of time between His 1st and 2nd comings. The 1000 years is not literal but symbolic for a period of time which Scripture calls “the last days.” Christ is currently ruling and reigning on the throne of David in heaven as I speak. In this view, **things get progressively worse**. Proponents of this view are Augustine, Louis Berkhof, Geerhardus Vos, William Hendriksen, Greg Beale, Michael Kruger, Jay Adams, Kim Riddlebarger, Sam Storms, Vern

Poythress.
 Cross 2nd Coming/Final Consummation
 + “1000 yrs” in heaven |
 -----→eternity
 “last days”

The Text Itself

- Chapter 19 ends the 6th cycle with the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ and ALL of God’s enemies are dead. That means chapter 20 begins a new cycle, the last cycle of Revelation, which also means that chapter 20 begins with the 1st coming of Jesus Christ and is going to go all the way through to the 2nd Coming.
- Two things are important to note in verses 1-3. First, Satan, who is the dragon of Revelation 12, and the serpent of Genesis 1, is bound in the bottomless pit. When did this occur? **Matthew 12:28-29** – “**But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can someone enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds** [SAME word as Revelation 20:2] **the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.**” After Jesus overcomes Satan in the wilderness, Jesus begins His public ministry, part of which includes casting out demons. Here in Matthew, Jesus basically says that He’s able to cast out demons and usher in the Kingdom of God because the strong man [Satan] has been bound. **Luke 10:17-19** – “The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “**I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.**” Jesus equates the casting out of demons by His disciples as Satan falling like lightning from heaven. The picture in Luke is of Satan being thrown downward and the picture here in Revelation 20 is of Satan being thrown downward. In Revelation 12:9, Satan and his angels are thrown down after the male child is caught up to God and His throne and the church flees into the wilderness. Satan is bound at the 1st Coming of Christ when he no longer has access to heaven to accuse the saints and this binding is depicted in Revelation 20 as kicking off the millennium. Also read John 12:31-32 as well as Colossians 2:15.
- The second thing to note in these verses is that Satan is bound “so that he might not deceive the nations any longer” until the 1000 years are ended. How can there be nations to deceive if all of God’s enemies are dead at the end of chapter 19? In chapter 19, everybody is dead. There’s nobody left to be deceived. Which means that Revelation 20 must start a new cycle which goes all the way back to the 1st coming of Jesus.
- Notice that the binding of Satan is in respect to one activity – no longer deceiving the nations. That means Satan still has power to tempt and act to thwart God’s purposes. But he cannot destroy the Church. Now that Satan is bound to no longer deceive the nations, the Church is commanded to go to the nations preaching the Gospel. Satan can’t stop the spread of the Gospel and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Listen to William Hendricksen: “Before the coming of Christ, His victory over the devil in the temptations, His ministry, His death, ascension and coronation, salvation had been largely limited to the Jews. God had suffered Satan to blind the eyes of the nations, so that these nations walked in their own ways. A great change was to take place. The ‘truth’ of the Gospel would gradually replace the ‘lie’ of the devil. Satan is bound so that he can deceive the nations no more. Christ will draw ‘all men’ to Himself. The chosen from *every* nation will be saved. Satan is unable to prevent the extension of the Church among the nations by means of an active missionary program. During this entire period he is prevented from causing the nations – the world in general – to destroy the Church as a mighty, missionary institution. The elect are brought from darkness to light and in that sense the Church conquers the nations, and the nations do not conquer the Church.”

5. After this picture of what happens on earth at the 1st coming of Christ, we get a picture in verses 4-6 of what happens in heaven during this same time period. Currently, at this moment between the 1st and 2nd comings of Jesus, Christ is reigning with His saints, at the end of verse 4. All of God's people are those who refuse to worship the beast and its image and refused to receive its mark. God's elect refuse to bow down to the worldly system of unjust governments and false religions. But then we get to some confusing language. There's a first resurrection and a second death. This implies a 2nd resurrection and a 1st death. What do these things mean? In Scripture, the word "first" can refer to a temporary or transient stage. **Revelation 21:1** - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. Then in verse 4 it says "the first things have passed away." The first heaven and earth, what we are currently living in, are temporary. They are going to pass away. So the first resurrection doesn't refer necessarily to a physical resurrection. The saints in heaven during the millennium don't have their physical bodies yet. The first resurrection is a reference to reigning with Christ in heaven as a disembodied soul. But that's not going to be forever. It's only temporary, because at the 2nd coming, Christ will bring those saints from heaven, they will be re-united with their bodies now made perfect and glorious, and they will reign with Christ on the New Heavens and the New Earth.



"The first resurrection is the translation of the soul from this sinful earth to God's holy heaven. It is followed at Christ's second coming by the second resurrection when the body, too, will be glorified." – William Hendricksen

6. Finally, in verses 7-10, Satan is released from the bottomless pit, which is called his prison, "to deceive the nations...Gog and Magog, [See Ezek. 38-39] to gather them for battle." Again, if all of God's enemies are dead at the end of Chapter 19, how can there be nations to be deceived and joined in battle against the Lord? These armies from the whole world ("four corners of the earth") are going to encircle the people of God, verse 9, but first from heaven will consume them. At that time, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and join the beast and the false prophet for eternal torment.
7. This same battle occurs in Revelation 16 with the 6th bowl – "For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon." It also occurs in Revelation 19 – "And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army." These are not 3 different battles. This is the same battle, The Battle of Armageddon, at the end of time from 3 different perspectives or angles.

Message for Us

1. "When Christians are a weak minority, when great imperial powers are arrayed against them, is there any hope for victory? What happens when Christians are viciously put to death? It appears to the world that they have been decisively defeated. Does God not care? Is He really in control? Can anything undo

the defeat that Christians have suffered through their martyrdom? When we see the heavenly realities, the tables are completely turned. It turns out that it is impossible to defeat Christians. Even when demonic forces are ravaging the Church, they are only establishing Christians in positions of real and permanent power.” –Vern Poythress

2. “The primary point of the millennium is to demonstrate the victory of God’s people, who throughout the church age will suffer Satan’s attacks but who will also, in return for their faithfulness, receive an eternal crown of glory.” –Greg Beale
3. “Though Christians should not expect all the nations to get better and better until the coming of Christ, we should pray and labor to bring the lives of people and nations under the power of the gospel so that they may walk in the light of God’s Word and be prepared for Christ’s return. Let us pray and labor incessantly for reformation and revival, even as we remember that Christ’s return will be a cataclysmic reversal of all this world has known.” – Joel Beeke