

Handout: Chapter 20

“and reigned with Christ for 1,000 years.” In #2 of the Introductory Lessons we talked about the 3 major millennium theories, each of which has variations. I do not want to revisit that lesson but we probably do need to quickly review the major theories. The question is: When is the Millennium? Is it before Christ’s Second Coming or is it after His Second Coming? That issue is what separates the Pre from Post-Millennialists and then there are the Amillennialists who believe there is no millennium. Please note that all views hinge on when Christ returns in relation to the 1,000-year reign and when the Great Tribulation occurs.

Historic Millennium	Postmillennial	Premillennial	Amillennial
God works with Israel	God works with Israel	God works with Israel	God works with Israel
Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension	Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension	Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension	Christ's mission, death, Resurrection, and Ascension
The Age of the Church	The Age of the Church	The Age of the Church	Church Age: -Tribulation and Millennial reign of Christ over the Kingdom of heaven on earth occur in the same time frame with great increase of evil at the end of the age
(Tribulation ? views divided. Many historicists do not believe in a period of Tribulation)	The Great Tribulation	The Rapture = 1st Second Coming of Christ followed by Pre 3 1/2 years Great Tribulation Post 3 1/2 years	
2nd Coming of Christ		2nd Second Coming of Christ	
Millennial Reign of Christ and the Church	Triumphant Millennial Reign of the Church (literal/symbolic)	Millennial Reign of Christ and the Church	
	2nd Coming of Christ		2nd Coming of Christ
Final Judgment	Final Judgment	Final Judgment	Final Judgment
Eternity	Eternity	Eternity	Eternity
Biblical problems with these views			
No suffering--a golden age	Church is cause of Christ coming	No suffering/ 2 Second Comings of Christ = second chance for unbelievers	

The Historic Millennium View

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Death Resurrection Ascension of Christ	Age of the Church in the spread of the Gospel	2nd Coming of Christ	Millennial Reign of Christ	Final Judgment	Eternal Reign of Christ
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Historic Millennialists envision the spread of the Gospel through the earth in the Age of the Church which is followed by Christ's Second Coming at the time the Gospel has reached every corner of the earth, completing the Church Age. The Second Coming is followed by the Final Judgment before God's Great White Throne, the destruction of Death and the grave and eternal life for the blessed. Generally (but not all) historic Millennialists do not envision a period of universal tribulation.

The Postmillennial View

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Death/Resurrection/ Ascension of Christ	Ministry of Church culminates in lengthy period of peace (millennium) and righteousness before Christ's return	Second Coming/ Final Judgment	Eternal Reign of Christ
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Postmillennialists expect Christ's visible return **after** the Millennium and that the Church Age is this millennial period. They look for God to use the Church's teaching and preaching to usher in a lengthy period (some interpret this as a literal 1,000 years that will come at the end of the Church Age, others symbolically) of peace and righteousness before Christ's return. So 'Postmills' are divided into two groups: those who interpret the 1,000yrs literally and those who hold it is symbolic but both believe Christ will return at the end of this period. 'Postmills' are optimists: they believe the world will get better as the Gospel spreads across the earth. Postmillennialists usually adopt the Historical or Preterist view of Revelation.

The Premillennial Views

Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the Millennium and that His Coming will usher in the Millennium. They interpret Revelation chapter 20 literally and hold that Christ will reign on earth for a literal 1,000 years. 'Postmills' are pessimists: they generally believe that things will get worse and worse and then Christ will come again and the Millennium will be ushered in and things will be great. Most Protestant ministers, radio evangelists and tele-evangelists are 'Premills' (ie Charles Stanley, Pat Robertson, Billy Graham, etc.) Within this basic agreement the most prevalent variations are the Premillennial-pretribulational and the Premillennial-post-tribulational views:

Premillennial/Pretribulational View

Death/ Resurrec- tion/ Ascen- sion of Christ	Church Age	Rapture of the Church	Great Trib- ulation/ 7 yrs	2 nd Coming of Christ	Millen- nium Reign of Christ	Final Judgment	Eternal Reign of Christ
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The 'Premill/Pretrib' scholars argue that there are 2 different peoples of God: Israel and the Church. They believe that these 2 groups have 2 different prophetic programs. According to this view, the Church will be "raptured" prior to a 7 year Great Tribulation. Some of these scholars support a 'Premill/Midtrib' position and believe the 7 years will be divided into two 3 ½ year periods with a short period of 3 ½ years that the Church will suffer before being "raptured out" by Christ). Following the tribulation, Christ will return to establish a 1,000 year millennial kingdom centered in Jerusalem and which will involve the reinstatement of the Old Covenant sacrificial system (not supported anywhere in Scripture). In their view the millennial kingdom will end with a rebellion by the forces of evil when Satan is unbound, after which will come the Final Judgment and beginning of the eternal reign of Christ. Hal Lindsey, author of the Late Great Planet Earth is a Premill/Pretrib.

The Premillennial/Post-tribulational View

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Death/ Resurrec- tion/ Ascension of Christ	Church Age	Great Trib- ulation = 7yrs	2 Coming of Christ	Millennium Reign of Christ	Final Judgment	Eternal Reign of Christ
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The Premillennial/post-tribulational scholars teach that Christ will return at the end of a 7 year Great Tribulation which the whole Church experiences to establish a millennial kingdom. This kingdom will end with a rebellion lead by Satan followed by the Final Judgment. This view often interprets prophecy in a non-literal way and does not usually view Israel and the New Covenant Church as under completely different divine historical plans. Rather they see Israel and the Christian Church as one people of God. Many early Church Fathers held a view that was similar to the ‘Premill/posttrib’ interpretation, but they did not hold the heresy that may ‘Premill/Pretribs’ hold today that the Millennium will be a resurrection of Old Covenant Israel. ‘Premills’ of both types adopt the “Futurists” school of interpretation of Revelation.

The Amillennial View

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Death/ Resurrection/ Ascension of Christ	The Church Age – continual growth and continual tribulation for the Church on earth	2 nd Coming/ Final Judgment	Eternal Reign of Christ
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The Amillennialists scholars interpret Christ’s millennial reign in an ideal or spiritual sense. While believing in a literal 2nd Coming of Christ, they however, reject the idea of a literal 1,000 year reign on the earth. Some ‘Amill’ scholars assert that Christ’s reign began during His earthly ministry or at the time of His resurrection. Others that His Millennium began with the glorious reign of the Saints in heaven or it describes the spiritual authority of the Saints of the Church here on earth. Some ‘Amills’ believe both views are correct: the heavenly glory of the resurrected Saints and the authority of the Universal Church now on earth because we can bind Satan in the name of Jesus. As a proof-text they cite St. Peter’s declaration that Christ now rules from the right hand of God the Father from Acts 2:33-36. Israel and the Church are viewed as forming one people of God. The “Amills” approach usually involves an “Idealist” view of the book of Revelation as a whole.

For the Catholic view please see CCC citation #s 668-682.