

Revelation, Part 18 — The Millennial Reign of Christ

Revelation 20 presents the fact that Christ will reign on earth for a 1,000 years and that Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit. If the chapter is taken literally, the revelation is easily understood. There are three major interpretations of the second coming and the reign of Christ. These three are broken down into many sub-groups and diverse interpretations and variations. We are not going to look into all of the variations, but only the three major viewpoints. If we reject the simple truth of the Biblical Revelation, there arises a resulting confusion.

The most recent view to arise is postmillennialism.

This view began to be presented in the 17th century. They suggest that the thousand years represents the triumph of the gospel in the period leading up to the second coming of Christ. The supposition is that Christ will reign spiritually on earth through the work of the church and the preaching of the gospel. This idea has been debunked by the fact that wickedness is abounding. 2 Timothy 3:13 NKJV But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

The second major view is amillennialism, which denies any literal reign of Christ on earth.

The reign of Christ is a spiritual reign in the hearts and lives of believers. Augustine was the first advocate of amillennialism and denied the actual 7 year tribulation and 1,000 year reign of Christ. He proposed these were symbolic of the age-long struggle of evil against Christ and His rule in believers. There are several modern advocates of this viewpoint.

Premillennialism is the third view and is so named because it interprets Revelation 20 as a literal thousand-year reign of Christ following His second coming to earth.

Since Christ returns to earth before the millennium it is called premillennial. This view follows the natural sequence of events presented by Biblical text. Many passages refer to the second coming of Christ followed by His righteous reign on earth, (Psalms 2; 24; 72; 96; Isaiah 2; 9:6-7; 11-12; 63:1-6; 65-66; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:8-11; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:1-8; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Zechariah 8:1-8; 14:1-9; Matthew 19:28; 25:31-46; Acts 15:16-18; Romans 11:25-27; Jude 14-15; Revelation 2:25-28; 19:11-20:6).

We have been presenting the view that the events of Revelation follow a chronological order.

Christ is coming back to this earth as conquering King and Lord of lords. He is called Faithful and True and comes to judge in righteousness and make war. His

eyes are like a flame of fire and He has many crowns on His head. His robe is dipped in blood and His name is called "The Word of God." Out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword by which He will judge the nations. He comes to conquer and judge all wickedness and unrighteousness. He is the One on the White Horse and on His thigh His name is written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

During His millennial reign there will be no sin, unrighteousness, evil, or trouble. All sickness, disease, suffering, pain, and death will cease. The earth will be better than it was in the Garden of Eden. The changes that are going to occur during the millennial reign of Christ will be dramatic. The wilderness and wasteland shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom abundantly as the rose. Everyone shall see the glory and excellency of God. The lame shall leap like a deer, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, and waters shall burst forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land a spring of water. There shall be grass with reeds and rushes. The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing and everlasting joy shall be on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, (Isaiah 35).

Matthew 16:27 NKJV For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

Just before the establishment of His 1,000 year reign on earth, the Antichrist and False Prophet will be cast into the lake of fire where there is no exit. In conjunction with their judgment, all of the allies of the Antichrist and the wicked people of the world will be slain by the word that proceeds out of the mouth of Christ.

The next major event transpires when Satan will be bound for 1,000 years and cast into the bottomless pit.

Revelation 20:1 NKJV Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

This is an unnamed angel that is given the key to the bottomless pit. Nothing in the text indicates that this is the Lord Jesus Christ who comes with the key and chain. This angel comes with the power of God to take and bind Satan for 1,000 years. This may be the same angel who was given the key to the bottomless pit with the fifth trumpet, (Revelation 9:1-2). At that time, the angel was sent to open the bottomless pit to release demon locust who tormented men on earth for five months. This time, the angel comes with the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Revelation 20:2 NKJV He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

The dragon, that serpent of old, is the Devil or Satan. He has been behind the trouble that has come upon mankind since he tempted Adam and Eve to sin in the garden. He has slandered, lied and murdered from the beginning. He has walked about as a roaring lion seeking to devour. He has accused, opposed and stood as an enemy of God and His followers.

Revelation 20:3 NKJV and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Satan will be removed and bound in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years and will not be able to deceive the nations.

This is going to produce a dramatic change in the earth. As long as he is the prince of the power of the air, he will have an influence on the actions of mankind and the atmosphere. Satan will be bound by a great chain and cast into the bottomless pit.

The reign of Christ will produce a dramatic change in nature and everything on earth.

Isaiah 35:1-2 NIV84 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

Romans 8:21 NKJV Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The nature of the animal kingdom will change.

Isaiah 11:6-9 NKJV The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

There will be a dramatic change in the wellbeing of every living being when aging, sickness and diseases are removed.

Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And

streams in the desert.

The curse will be removed from earth and it will blossom and produce as the garden of God.

Joel 3:18 NKJV And it will come to pass in that day That the mountains shall drip with new wine, The hills shall flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water; A fountain shall flow from the house of the Lord And water the Valley of Acacias.

The millennium is not just a spiritual reign of Christ, but a literal reign instituted by the return of Christ to earth.

Some have adopted what is called the “realized millennial view.” They believe this is a spiritual reign of Christ that began with the ascension of Christ and ends when Christ returns to earth. This view holds that the reign of Christ is being “*realized*” now.

Christ’s literal rule and reign on earth is presented in over 400 verses in the Bible. Throughout the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth, there will be no tempter and there will be peace on earth.

At the end of the millennium, Satan will be released for a short time to deceive the nations and natural peoples of the world. That will be discussed in verses 7-10.

The Saints Reign With Christ for 1,000 Years

Revelation 20:4 NKJV And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The mention of “*thrones*” represents several groups in Bible prophecy.

- In Revelation 4:4, the twenty-four elders were on thrones around the throne.
- In Matthew 19:28, Jesus told his apostles they would sit on thrones with Him when He sits on His throne in glory.
- In 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, the saints will judge the world and angels.

All of these represent those who are sitting on thrones.

Then John saw all of those who were martyrs for their witness to Jesus and the Word of God, who did not worship the beast, his image or receive his mark.

The will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

The rule of Christ on earth will establish His government, rule and reign of righteousness on earth.

Christ will give believers their reward, duty, assignment, and field of service.

Revelation 20:5 NKJV But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

The first resurrection is not a single event but includes the resurrection of all the righteous at various times.

- Christ was the firstfruits of the resurrection, (1 Corinthians 15:23).
- The dead saints of the Old Testament are part of the first resurrection, (Matthew 27:52-53).
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, shows the resurrection of the dead saints and the rapture of the living church, (Matthew 24:30-31).
- The raptured believers from every tribe and tongue and people and nation are seen around the throne of God in Revelation 5, before the beginning of the tribulation.
- The martyred tribulation saints are seen around the throne arrayed in white robes, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Revelation 7:13-17).
- The two witnesses will be resurrected after lying dead in the streets for three days, (Revelation 11:11).

The end of the first resurrection is announced in Revelation 20:5.

This holy and joyous resurrection was declared by Old Testament Prophets, (Isaiah 26:19-21; Ezekiel 37:12-14; Daniel 12:2-3). All who share in the first resurrection of the righteous will bear the nature of Christ and be blessed and holy. The hosts of these resurrected saints come from every nation, kindred, tongue and people. They are Gentile believers and believers from Israel. They are the saints of the Old and New Testament and the Tribulation saints. Their earthly body will be changed and fashioned like His glorious body, (Philippians 3:20-21). "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is," (1 John 3:2).

There will be a second resurrection after the Millennium and reign of Christ (Revelation 20:5).

The second resurrection involves the rest of the dead. Until that time, the bodies of the wicked dead remain in the grave and their souls are in hades, (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:11-16). They will be resurrected in the end and must give account of themselves before God at the Great White Throne Judgment. This will be discussed later in Revelation 20:11-15.

The first resurrection will be blessed and the second resurrection will be to judgment and the second death.

Revelation 20:6 NKJV Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The first resurrection brings blessing, power and privilege. All who participate in the first resurrection will be blessed and holy and shall partake of the blessing of the Lord. The eternal judgment, second death, and lake of fire will have no power over them. The second death is the eternal punishment of the wicked in the lake of fire. They will be priest of God and Christ, and shall reign with Him for a thousand years. The thousand years are a literal period of time that Christ will reign on earth.