

Four Views about the Millennium Revelation 20:1-10

Historic Premillennialism

- Primary belief among believers for the first three centuries
- Believers are looking for Christ to return and establish his kingdom on earth
- Times will get worse until Jesus returns
- A 1,000-year rule of Christ on earth will fulfill many OT prophecies; Satan will be bound, and Jesus will rule with a rod of iron
- At the end of the millennium, Satan will be allowed to lead a rebellion against Jesus at which time he will be crushed. Satan and evil spirits along with all unbelievers will be judged and punished for eternity

Scripture: Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalm 2:9 with Revelation 2:27; Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 2:7-8; 8:8-13; Romans 11:26; Revelation 19-20

Benefits:

- Motivated to evangelize all nations
- Pray and look for Christ's return
- A strong sense of judgment that inspires holy living

Weaknesses:

- Pessimism about society and little motivation to work toward improving the lives of the disadvantaged
- Suspicious, in fact, of social ministries

Dispensational Premillennialism

- God works differently in different periods – or dispensations – of time
- Sharp distinction between Israel and the church
- OT promises to Israel are to be taken literally and will be fulfilled in the millennium
- Secret rapture before, during, or after a seven-year tribulation, which precedes the millennial reign of Christ

Scripture: Isaiah 32; Ezekiel 37-48; Daniel 7:23-27; Matthew 24-25; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 3:21; 7:14

Benefits:

- Takes the OT seriously – broad knowledge of Scripture
- Strong evangelistic impulse, especially for the Jews (Romans 1:16)
- Always looking for Jesus' return

Weaknesses:

- Extremely complex system – charts
- Anticipation of Jesus' return can almost lead to a desire for worsening social systems

Amillennialism

- The kingdom is spiritual, not physical – Revelation 20 recapitulates (describes the same event in another way) Revelation 19
- The kingdom, according to Jesus, is *already* (Mt 11:4-6; 12:29; Mk 1:15; Lk 11:20), but *not yet* (Mt 6:10; Mk 9:1; Lk 17:20-21)
- The rapture will be public, not secret; antichrist and tribulation are symbolic

Scripture: Mark 3:25-27; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 20:1-6

Strengths:

- Already/not yet emphasis
- Service to King Jesus is present, not future
- Understands that grace binds OT and NT together

Weaknesses:

- Possible apathy toward evangelism and Jesus' return
- While Christ is present during his reign, it is only in/from heaven

Postmillennialism

- The spread of the gospel will make the world a better place
- Jesus will return *after* the millennium
- Popular during times of peace and advances in society

Scripture: Psalm 2:7-9; Matthew 13:31-32; 28:18-20; Hebrews 2:5-9

Strengths:

- Focus on evangelism
- Focus on improving society according to God's laws/ways
- Strive for peace and justice in progress

Weaknesses:

- WWI, WW2, Ungodly rulers
- Fails to account for increasingly troubled times on the earth, prophesied by Jesus
- Jesus is not here to reign
- Temptation to Utopian impulse, seeking to silence opponents of the gospel through force