

The Revelation to John

Chapter 20

The Millennium – verses 1-6

The Millennium (Latin for “1,000 years”) shows up only in the Book of Revelation. It is among the most controversial topics in Rev.—there are entire denominations that require a specific interpretation of these six verses as a qualification for membership.

Sequential Event or Non-sequential (Interlude # 5)?

Sequential: **Historic Premillennialism** (*e.g.* Justyn Martyr, Irenaeus, etc...)

- A long period of time that Christ inaugurates at His return
- The saints reign over the nations
- Binding of Satan (Rev 20.2) is literal and complete (see *e.g.* 2 Cor. 4.4; Eph. 2.2)
- “They came to life” (20.5) is a literal resurrection of the martyrs who reign with Jesus on earth for the Millennium.

Non-sequential: **Amillennial** (*e.g.* Later Augustine)

- The Millennium is the present spiritual reign of Christ through his Church
- Not a literal thousand years, but a significant period of time
- The binding of Satan (Rev 20.2) is more of an inhibiting (see *e.g.* Mark 3.27; Luke 10.18; 2 Thess. 2.7-10)
- “They came to life” (20.5) refers to their souls entering into the presence of God in Heaven after their death (cf. Rev. 6.9-11; 2 Cor. 5.1-8; John 5.28=5, 28-29)

Alternatively: **Postmillennial** (a non-sequential view holding that the world will more and more come under the dominion of Christ until his return). Lost favor after WWI but is beginning to make a comeback.

The Rev. Dr. Rod Whitacre:

- The **Amillennial** view fits best within the larger context of the New Testament
- The **Premillennial** view fits best within the context of the Book of Revelation itself.

- Both are congruent with an orthodox Christian faith (*i.e.* this is not a salvation issue)

Creating a people through history—Priests who reign: Rev 20.6; 1.6; Exod. 19.6 (the lens through which we view history, reading scripture, and understand the purpose of creation).

The Final Defeat of Satan – verses 7-10

“Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Matt. 25.41

George Ladd: “Hell was planned not for man but for the devil; and those who follow him must share his destiny”

The Final Judgment – verses 11-5

God renews the earth (see Isaiah 65.17-25; 2 Peter 3.12-13)

The Book of Deeds/ The Book of Life (*cf.* Divine Grace & Human responsibility)
For relationship between Faith and Works see Gal. 5.6; Rom. 14.12; 1 Cor. 3.12-15; 2 Cor. 5.10; James 2.14-26.

The Lake of Fire

- God is a consuming fire (Deut. 4.24; 9.3; Heb. 12.29)
- God and fire (*cf.* Gen. 15.17; Exod. 3.2; 13.21; 19.18; Dan. 7.9-10; Matt. 3.10-12; Mark 9.49; Luke 12.49).
- The fire **will** come: Gold refined in fire glows and is beautiful; wood/hay/straw is destroyed (1 Cor 3.12-15)

Two interpretations:

- Literal
- Lake of fire as God’s presence (an Eastern orthodox perspective)
“The very thing that makes Heaven a delight for those who love God is what makes Hell a misery for those that are not aligned with God” ~ *The Rev. Dr. Rod Whitacre*

Gods Wrath / God’s Love

- God is love (1 John 4.8)
- We are to abide in His love (2 Pet 1.10; John 15.9)
- There are those who will be shut out (Luke 13.22-30)