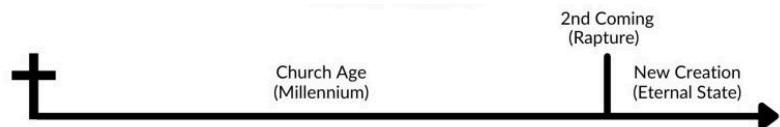


Revelation 20:1–6 (ESV)

[1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. [2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and **Satan**, and **bound him for a thousand years**, [3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, *so that he might not deceive the nations any longer*, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

[4] Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. [5] The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the **first resurrection**. [6] Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the **second death** has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and *they will reign with him for a thousand years*.

The term **millennium** comes from the Latin words *mille* (thousand) and *annum* (year). It refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ, mentioned only in the passage above. Disagreement about what this passage means goes back to the beginning of church history. Each interpretation seeks to be faithful to the text, but none is free from difficulty.



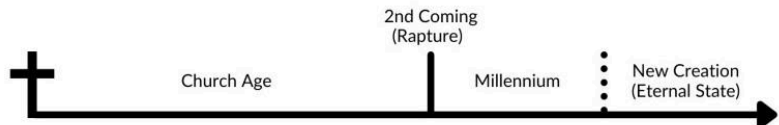
AMILLENNIALISM

- **Meaning:** “No literal millennium” (better described as a “realized” millennium)
- **Summary:** The millennium is symbolic of the entire church age—from Christ’s first coming to His second. This age is understood to be the ‘last days’ spoken of in Scripture. Christ is reigning now from heaven alongside the souls of departed believers.
- **Satan’s Binding:** Occurred at Christ’s resurrection (John 12:31–33; Col. 2:14–15; Rev. 12:9–11)
- **First Resurrection:** The believer’s entrance into life with Christ at death (spiritually alive) (Eph. 2:5–6; Col. 3:1–4; Phil. 1:21–23; 2 Cor. 5:6–8)
- **Second Coming:** Single, climactic event—Christ returns, the dead are raised, the judgment occurs, and the new creation begins (John 5:28–29)
 - **Advocates:** Augustine, John Calvin, Anthony Hoekema, G.K. Beale
- **Challenges:** (1) Satan is still described in the NT as active and powerful (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19). (2) *Anastasis* typically refers to bodily resurrection, not spiritual, calling the interpretation of Rev. 20:5–6 into question.

POSTMILLENNIALISM



- **Meaning:** Christ returns *after* the millennium
- **Summary:** The millennium is a future golden age of gospel expansion and global influence for the church before Christ returns. The world will gradually be transformed by the gospel.
- **Satan's Binding:** Already occurred to allow the gospel to reach the nations (Matt. 28:18–20)
- **First Resurrection:** Spiritual new birth and/or triumph of martyrs in heaven (Rom. 6:4–5; Rev. 20:4–6)
- **Second Coming:** Follows the millennium—includes general resurrection and judgment (John 5:28–29)
 - **Advocates:** Jonathan Edwards, B. B. Warfield, Kenneth Gentry
- **Challenges:** (1) The NT consistently teaches that Christ's return is near (James 5:8; Rev. 22:12). A long golden age before His coming undercuts this urgency. (2) Scripture anticipates increasing lawlessness and apostasy (2 Thess. 2:3–12), not a worldwide revival.



PREMILLENNIALISM (HISTORIC)

- **Meaning:** Christ returns *before* the millennium
- **Summary:** Christ will return to earth, raise the righteous dead, and reign for 1,000 years before the final judgment.
- **Satan's Binding:** Occurs at Christ's return to prevent deception during the millennium
- **First Resurrection:** Bodily resurrection of believers at Christ's return (1 Thess. 4:16)
- **Second Coming:** Marks the beginning of the millennium—judgment of unbelievers follows 1,000 years (Rev. 20:5, 11–15)
 - **Advocates:** Justin Martyr, George Eldon Ladd, Jim Hamilton
- **Challenges:** (1) If the righteous are glorified and the wicked are judged at Christ's return, who remains in mortal bodies to populate the millennium? (2) This requires multiple bodily resurrections separated by a thousand years, which appears to conflict with the NT pattern of a single, unified resurrection and judgment (John 5:28–29; 1 Cor. 15:22–24).

Though these views differ, all faithful Christians agree: Christ will return, the dead will be raised, final judgment will occur, and we will dwell with Him forever in the new heavens and new earth. We should study these things *carefully*—but hold them *humbly*. The millennium, however we understand it, is temporary. The new creation is eternal.