

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST

Revelation 20:1-5

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

The essential elements of the premillennial doctrine centers around the following facts:

1. Christ originally came to the earth to establish His kingdom, but
2. The world was too wicked to accept Him as king, and He was crucified instead,
3. Hence, the kingdom was not inaugurated, but the church was established, to take the place of the kingdom until He returns.
4. A rapture will occur at His second coming when all the saints will be caught up to be with the Lord.
5. Seven years of tribulation will follow on the earth caused by the Anti-Christ, who will be defeated at the battle of Armageddon when Christ will return and put down all evil.
6. At this point, Christ will establish His kingdom and reign in Jerusalem for 1000 years.
7. After the 1000 years, there will come the general judgment, and finally Heaven and Hell.

I. Undesirable Consequences of the Premillennial Theory:

A. The Kingdom Prophecies Are Made Void

If even one prophecy concerning the establishment of the kingdom has not been fulfilled, in the time and manner God decreed, that would prove God made a mistake. **Isaiah 2:2-4** declared that the “mountain of the Lord’s house” would be established in “the last days.” **Acts 2:16-17** identifies that occasion as “the last days.” “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God...” So, the kingdom had to be established at that time. If it was not, then the prophecy failed.

(Daniel 2:44) “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.” The giant image with a (head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, feet of iron and clay) represented the (Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman) empires.

In the days of the Roman kings, God was to set up His kingdom, i.e. the days of the Roman Empire. If the scriptures are dependable, then the kingdom is established and the prophecies have been fulfilled.

B. God's Power Is Limited.

The claim that the world was not ready for the kingdom presents great problems. What if the world is not ready for the second coming of Christ? In **Mark 1:14-15**, Jesus declared "the time is fulfilled." And in **Mark 9:1**, Jesus said "Some of you standing here will not taste of death until you see the kingdom come with power."

The Apostles were promised "power" in **Acts 1:8**. When the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost, the power came, and with it, the establishment of the kingdom. (**Acts 2:4**) "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak..."

C. A Material Kingdom Is Anticipated.

The premillennial doctrine makes the same mistake the Jews made in expecting an earthly kingdom. Jesus declared: The kingdom would not come with observation, i.e. with a visible, earthly monarch. (**Luke 17:20-21**) "My kingdom is not of this world" Jesus said... (**John 18:36-38**) People become citizens of the kingdom by the new birth, (**John 3:5**) which is a spiritual birth. Hence, the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, not material. Jesus declared, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (**John 17:4**) For what work will He return?

D. The Church Is Made a Substitute.

The premillennial theory makes the church a substitute, or afterthought, for the kingdom. But God declares that the church is a part of the "eternal purpose" of God. (**Ephesians 3:10-11**) The church is to make known the "manifold wisdom of God." Jesus spoke of the church and kingdom as though they are one and the same in **Matthew 16:18-19**.

E. The Doctrine Makes the Writers of the New Testament Sound Confused.

(**Colossians 1:13**) "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

(**Revelation 1:9**) John declared that he was "in the kingdom."

(**Revelation 1:5-6; 5:9-10**) John describes those purchased by the blood of Christ as "a kingdom and priesthood." Did not these inspired men know what they were talking about when they spoke of the Kingdom being in existence? Surely they did.

II. Will There Be a Rapture?

Everyone would like to know the future. This is why fortune tellers and psychics do a booming business. The idea of a Rapture captivates the imagination of man. It has been sensationalized by the advocates of the premillennial doctrine in such phrases as “in case of the rapture this car will be unmanned.” From the amount of rhetoric, you would think that the bible says a lot about “the rapture.” However, the English bible doesn’t even mention the word. To the pre-millennialist, the rapture refers to the secret catching away of the church, when both resurrected and living saints, will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The suggestion is that **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** teaches the doctrine: “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Do these verses teach the modern theory of the rapture? A close examination reveals – no, they do not.

Theory: the rapture will be silent.

But the Lord will come with a SHOUT with the VOICE of the archangel and the TRUMP of God. (**1 Corinthians 15:52**) “at the last trump: for the trumpet will sound.” (**2 Peter 3:10**) “The Lord will come with a GREAT NOISE.”

Theory: the rapture will be secret.

(**Revelation 1:7**) “he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him.”

Theory: the rapture will be for only seven years.

Jesus said the resurrection will occur at the “last day.” (**John 6:39, 40, 44**)

(**1 Thessalonians 4:14**) When the saints arise from the grave to meet the Lord in the air, “so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Notice that: ever be with the Lord, not just seven years.

What Is the Thousand Year Reign of Christ?

Revelation 20:1-10

These passages have been the favorite text of religious speculators, perhaps more than any other in the entire bible. Out of it have come fantastic theories. These are the only verses in the bible that mention a 1000 year reign. Whatever that means, and whatever these verses teach, must all be in harmony with what the rest of the bible teaches. The central doctrine of premillennialism teaches a literal reign of 1000 years by Christ upon this earth.

It is noteworthy that this text does not mention:

1. the second coming of Christ
2. a bodily resurrection
3. a reign "on the earth"
4. the literal throne of David
5. Jerusalem or Palestine
6. "us" instead of "they" who lived and reigned; and
7. Christ on earth

The defeat of Satan is the theme of **Revelation 20:1-10**. This passage, as well as the entire book, is primarily written in symbolic language.

Verse 1 – The angel is not identified – but probably represents a servant of Christ ministering to the divine will.

The "key" signifies authority over the abyss, i.e. the power to bind.

"great chain" represents his ability to limit the power of Satan by confining him to the bottomless pit.

Verse 2 – Satan being bound does not indicate that he can no longer do certain things, as he has always done.

He goes about a lion seeking to devour. (**1 Peter 5:8**) However, he is limited. A lion, for example, that is confined within a fenced area can still maul and destroy one who enters his realm, but has no power to hurt one outside the boundary. A dog on a chain can still attack if you get within his reach. The indication is that his power is greatly curtailed. He can no longer control the nations as he once did, nor can he control a man against his will. The 1000 years is symbolic, as are other numbers in the book, and stand for an undetermined, but full period of time.

Verse 3 – Casting Satan into the pit was not punitive, for his punishment comes later (see verse 10), but was preventive. He is restrained from deceiving the nations in the matter of emperor worship, and controlling them as he previously had done. The thousand years is figurative, just as the "key", "pit", etc. are, and should be understood as apocalyptic imagery, symbolizing a full uninterrupted period of time, at the end of which Satan will be loosed from his prison for a brief period of time.

Verse 4 – In this verse, John sees the triumph of the martyrs who had died as a result of the work of the devil, the first and second beast. Just as the devil was bound, the martyrs were victorious. These martyrs are not under the altar (as they were in 6:9-11), but are on thrones reigning with Christ. John saw "souls," not "bodies." And it was "they" and not "us" that were reigning. These

had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus; they had not worshipped the beast nor his image; neither had they received the mark of the beast. The inconsistency of the premillennialist is apparent when they insist upon a literal interpretation of the 1000 years, yet fail to accept the fact that “all who reign” had been beheaded. These saints were in a spiritual realm, not on the earth.

Verse 5 – The rest of the dead refer to the wicked servants of the beast that were killed with the sword of Christ. (19:21) Their cause which had been advanced through the beast and false prophet does not prevail until the thousand years are finished, at which time they will experience a (figurative) resurrection in Satan’s revived effort, described in v. 7-9. The first resurrection is figurative, not literal, and refers to the victory of the martyred souls, pictured in the vision. It is the resurrection of a cause. They reign with Christ in the millennium.

Verse 6 – The second death is the “lake of fire” of 20:14. All die once. (**Hebrews 9:27**) Only those who reject God and His will suffer the second death. The cause for which these early saints died has not been in vain. They reign victoriously for a full, uninterrupted period of time on spiritual thrones. Their cause has been vindicated. The kingdoms of men may come and go, but the kingdom of the Lord has withstood all the powers of the evil one.

Verse 7 – The Loosing of Satan

Satan is freed at the end of the 1000 years, however, his attitude has not changed. He remains the avowed and relentless enemy of God and His people. We are not given much information as to the nature of this period. It may be that it signifies a period of great wickedness just before the second coming of Christ, somewhat like the days of Noah before the flood. The length of his effort will last for “a little season.” (v.3)

Verse 8 – Gog and Magog, in this verse, are based on Ezekiel’s figurative use of them in Chapter 38-39 to describe the pagan forces that fought against the kingdom of God.

Here these symbols are employed to again represent all of the world’s spiritual pagan forces that Satan can command in an attempt to overthrow God’s spiritual kingdom. This is not a carnal conflict, but rather a spiritual and moral one -- the forces of truth against the forces of evil. Satan’s allies are abundant: secular humanism, immorality, materialism, atheism, astrology, false religion, drug cults, and all manner of evil.

Verse 9 – One last attempt to abolish the church will be made. The how is uncertain. It may be that Satan will gather the world together to oppose God and substitute paganism in the place of the true worship of the Lord. One thing is sure -- so long as earthly history continues, Satan will never give up in his attempts to destroy the kingdom of God. He is the adversary.

Verse 10 – It will not work. Satan will lose this battle also. This time he will be cast into the lake of fire where all his allies are. All who reject the Lord will be there also. Once Satan is cast there, there will not be one single enemy left to oppress the church. The visions of this book have already shown what has happened to (1) those who have the mark of the beast (Chapter 14-16); (2) to the harlot Babylon (Chapter 17-18); (3) to the beast and false prophet (Chapter 19); (4) and finally to the dragon (Chapter 20). The Church will survive, the kingdom will not be destroyed.