

Millennialism

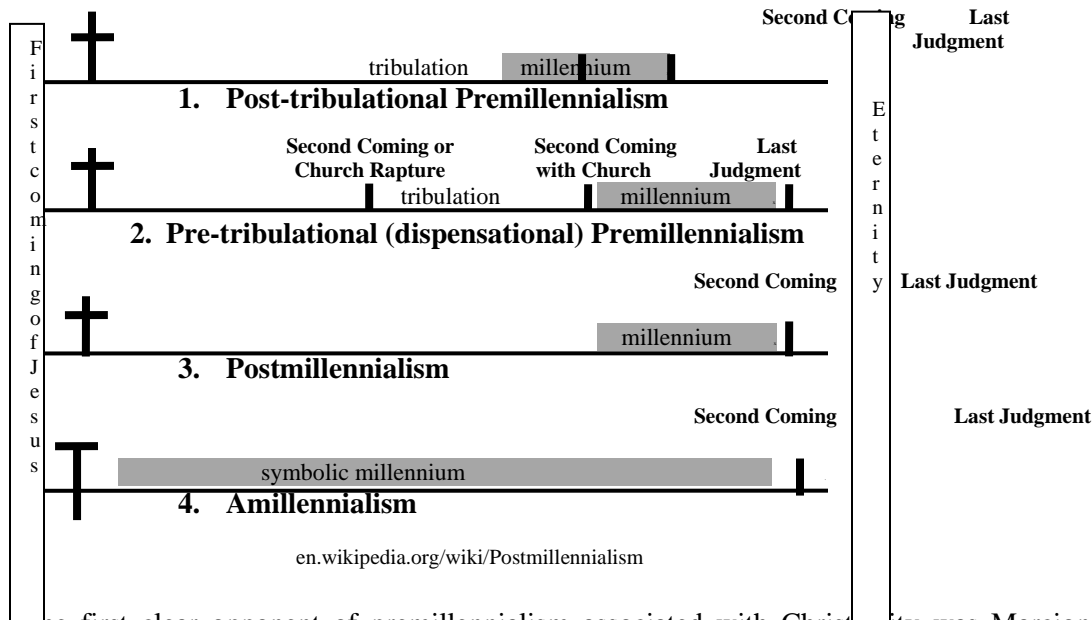
The term "millennium" does not occur in English translation. It is from a Latin word meaning a thousand years. The various interpretations are:

Premillennialists - Christ's kingdom has not yet been established and that his second literal and bodily coming to earth will precede its establishment, after which he will reign for a thousand years before the end of history.

Dispensationalists - Israel is distinct from the Church, and that God will establish a millennial kingdom in Israel where Christ, upon His return, will rule the world from Jerusalem for a thousand years

Postmillennialists - Christ's kingdom was established as a sequel to his first coming, that the millennium will be a golden age of the kingdom lasting till near the end of history after which Christ will come a second time at the end of history.

Amillennialists – none of the premillennialists theories are accepted for various reasons. Some of them believe that no time element at all is symbolized by the thousand years, but simply the completeness of the victory of Christ and his saints over Satan and all his agents.



The first clear opponent of premillennialism associated with Christianity was Marcion (85-160 AD). Marcion opposed the use of the Old Testament and most books of the New Testament that were not written by the apostle Paul. He was the first great heretic who broke drastically with the faith of the early church in abandoning the doctrine of the imminent, personal return of Christ. Marcion did not believe in a real incarnation, and consequently there was no logical place in his system for a real Second Coming. He expected the majority of mankind to be lost denying the validity of the Old Testament and its Law. Other pre-Nicean premillennialists were Irenaeus, Justin, Theophilus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus of Rome. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premillennialism

Millennialism is also a doctrine of medieval Zoroastrianism concerning successive thousand-year periods, each of which will end in a cataclysm of heresy and destruction, until the final destruction of evil and of the spirit of evil by a triumphant king of peace at the end of the final millennial age (supposed by some to be the year 2000). "Then Saoshyant makes the creatures again pure, and the resurrection and future existence occur" (*Zand-i Vohuman Yasht* 3:62). [In Persian mythology Saoshyant is the one who will come to renew all life at the end of time (rd).]

Various other social and political movements, both religious and secular, have also been linked to millennialists metaphors

What does the Bible state? Revelation 20:1-15

- “And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven,
- having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.
- He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.
- He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended.
- After that, he must be set free for a short time.
- I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge.
- And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands.
- They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.
- Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection.
- The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.
- When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.
- And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.
- Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them.
- And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

A brief explanation

- **An Angel from Heaven** - John is on earth when he sees this part of the vision
- **Having the key to the abyss** – In chapter nine Satan had this key, so now He has been defeated.
- **The dragon bound for 1000 years** - The devil is totally and perfectly [completely] defeated and bound with reference to his working through Rome against the church, (witness the chain, the pit and the sealing closed). This was the end of the history of the Roman Empire but not for Satan. He would be released to try again using other nations.
- **For 1000 years** - 1000 years does not speak of a time period but a state of affairs. Applied to Satan it is total defeat. Applied to the saints it is total victory. The number 1000 means totality. Psalm 50:10 says God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Deuteronomy 7:9 says God keeps His promises for a thousand generations. Psalm 105:8 and 1 Chronicles 16:15 say God commanded His word for a thousand generations. The idea is totality and not a limited time period.

Notice some other ideas or theories regarding the 1000 years:

1. 1000 years is the whole Christian dispensation (from then until the end of time). The problem with this idea is that it requires a little time period of earth history after the end of time.

2. 1000 years is all of time until just before the second coming of Christ. The problem with this idea is that it would limit the reigning priest-hood period of the Christians to less than the whole Christian era.
3. 1000 years following the destruction of Rome when Christianity flourished. The problem with this idea is that it would require the dead martyrs to be raised about a thousand years ago.
 - **Satan in the sealed abyss** - Satan is not limited in action, he is stopped!
 - **Satan loosed for a little time to deceive the nations** - This is not a time period but a message where God says to the Christians: "I protected you in the past and will do it in the future, anywhere, anytime, against any foe. This is God's guarantee for the future, just like in Ezekiel 38-39.
 - **Those sitting on thrones** - Those who sit on thrones are reigning. They are those to whom was given the authority to judge. Who are they? They are victorious, faithful saints, living or dead. Jesus had promised that the overcomers would share with Him in ruling over the nations (Revelation 2:26f; 3:21; 11:15-18; 18:20). This is the same as Daniel 7: 21, 22.
 - **Souls of them beheaded for Jesus' sake** - These are the martyrs in the persecution. They are resurrected (they live) and reign with Christ. Picture the battleground after the battle of Revelation 19 with the ground littered with the bodies of the slain. Those slain that are Christian martyrs are resurrected and join the living saints on thrones to rule with God. Those who were killed did not lose out because immediately they were raised to die no more. This is the "first resurrection." Notice that these are only the martyrs in the conflict of Revelation and not those Christians who had died all throughout history. This is not a literal resurrection that will happen when Jesus returns. Here is only a symbolic way of saying the faithful saints are victorious and secure.
 - **The rest of the dead** - are those who died in the vision in service of the beast and they remain dead for 1000 years (symbolically) only to be raised up and destroyed again. They were living losers. They are dead losers and they will live again only to be losers. Verse 5 is parenthetical. To get the sense read v4 then v5b: ("The Christian martyrs lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. This is the first resurrection.") That the foes of Jesus remain dead for a thousand years simply means that they were totally defeated in their war against Christ and the church. It is not referring to a literal time period.
 - **The first resurrection** - this is the resurrection of martyrs for Jesus. It is called "first" because John will see a second resurrection. Both God's servants and the beast's servants died in the first death but only the good guys are in the first resurrection. The first resurrection is to life and reigning but the second resurrection is to the second death. The message is that the dead in Christ share in the victory just as surely as do the living servants of God.
 - **Priests of God ...reign 1000 years** - this doesn't talk about how long Jesus reigns but how long the saints would reign. The point here is not time but total victory and blessedness. What they had before they died (kingdom of priests), continued after they died. In life and in death the servants of God are victorious.
 - **Satan loosed and deceives the nations (again)** - Satan will continue to operate in the world to destroy the faith of God's servants.
 - **Gog and Magog** - They are anybody yet nobody in particular just as they were used in Ezekiel 38, 39. The message is this in both places: God says to His people: "I have already defended you and made you victorious in this present crisis and I will do it again whenever you need it." The emphasis is on the size of this new future enemy (whatever) and the ease with which God will defeat them also. Christians, don't worry about God's desire and ability to protect you against any and all enemies, now or in the future! A note about pre-millennial theories: All attempts to create a huge army of God-haters in a world where Satan does not act and only God's servants live is doomed to failure (especially if you believe in the impossibility of apostasy).
 - **The devil cast into the lake of fire** - The lake of fire symbolizes total defeat. Nobody returns after being thrown into the lake of fire. This is not about eternal punishment but victory of God's people and defeat of God's enemies.
 - **Great white throne** - is not the literal judgment day before which all men must appear one day. This is just like Daniel 7:9-12 where Rome (the fourth kingdom) is judged.

- **Second resurrection** - the beast's worshippers are raised. The servants of God are not because they were raised 1000 years earlier (in the vision).

In this vision the devil is bound 1000 years to show how he was totally defeated in his war against the church using Rome. He is loosed a little while because after Rome there would be other attempts and they would meet the same fate. Victory is presented by the vision of saints (living ones and raised ones) reigning and judging in perfect [complete] victory. This chapter says complete victory of Christ and His church and complete defeat for Satan and the church persecuting Roman Empire. Revelation 20 explanation from [The Revelation of John The Apostle](#), Joe McKinney, TheBibleWay Online