

The Thousand Years, Part 3; Millennial Purpose (Revelation 20:1–15)

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Introduction

We have taken some time to build a foundation for examining Revelation 20:1–6.

1. The interpretation of any passage rests on a set of assumptions, and we must be sure that ours agree with those of the authors of Scripture.
2. Premillennialism rests on the assumption that God must fulfill promises made to Israel with Israel only.
3. We must ask, how do the authors of the NT interpret those same passages?
 - a. Do Paul and Peter teach anything that can be interpreted as supporting a premillennial return of Christ to earth?
 - b. How does one's premillennial position lend itself to the clear redemptive purpose of God outlined in Scripture?
 - c. What does a normative reading of Revelation 20 suggest in light of the Revelation being a book with many figurative elements?
4. In other words, what we want to investigate is how Revelation 20:1–6 fits into the whole scheme of God's purpose in Christ to redeem and restore all things (Rom. 8:35–39).

I. The Last Days

1. The Bible is *one* story of redemption and restoration.
 - a. It begins in the Garden of Eden with the failure of the first Adam and ends with the success of the Second Adam in a new creation (Gen. 3; Rev. 21).
 - b. The key to this story of redemption is Genesis 3:15, which states the purpose of God to destroy Satan and his works through a redeemer (1 John 3:8).
2. This redeemer (“seed of the woman”) successfully accomplished God's purpose by His death—suffering the *curse* of Adam's disobedience—and through His obedience was rewarded with life in His resurrection.
 - a. His resurrection and ascension mark the dawn of the Messianic Age, celebrating His victory and fulfilling the promises of the OT prophets (Luke 2:29–32).
 - b. All that remains is but to wait the consummation at His return (Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 9:28; 10:12, 13; 2 Pet. 3:11–13).
 - c. This interval of waiting between His first and second comings is called the “*last days*” (Acts 2:17–21).
 - d. The issue that must be settled with respect to the millennium is where it fits into this waiting for consummation.
3. The place of the millennium is important to the interpretation of Revelation 20 because prophecy is not just a future expectation.
 - a. Prophecy serves to unify God's story of the redemptive purpose to restore all things; thus, the “last days” is a period of *fulfillment* until the final consummation (1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:26–28).
 - b. A greater question with respect to the millennial discussion is how the premillennial view contributes to this flow of redemptive purpose.

II. Interpretive Review

1. Should not the OT promises and prophecies be interpreted through Christ and His accomplishment as viewed in the NT?
 - a. How do the NT writers interpret the expectation of a restored Israel in the last days (see Acts 15:12–18)?
 - b. Peter’s sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:14–40) would have provided a great opportunity to present a future Davidic Kingdom; however, Peter shows that kingdom to be a present reality in Jesus Christ (vv. 32–36).
2. The basic presupposition of dispensational premillennialism is that OT promises for the restoration of Israel must be literally fulfilled in that nation and its land.
 - a. This leads to the teaching that God has a dual purpose in redemption—one for Israel and one for the church, each separate and distinct.
 - b. This focus makes an earthly millennial rule of Christ at His second coming logical and necessary.
 - c. Where, however, is this conclusion taught?
3. Last week we emphasized that how we interpret Scripture is crucial to understanding the truth.
 - a. According to the principle of *the Analogy of Faith*, no Scripture should be interpreted so as to conflict with what is taught in any other text elsewhere.
 - b. No position should be taken using an obscure context that overrides doctrine established plainly by other texts.
4. Dispensational interpretation rejects the *Analogy of Faith* and insists that we interpret *all* Scripture *literally*.
 - a. “If the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, but take every word at its ordinary face value unless otherwise indicated.”
 - b. Literal interpretation is good, but often the plain sense is rejected for a literalistic sense—one that conforms to presumptions brought to the text (Scofield on Acts 15).

III. Amillennial View (see attached chart)

Application

1. As followers of Christ, it is not our business to get sidetracked in speculations about how contemporary events fulfill prophecies.
2. It is our business to wait for the consummation of all things by obediently living out our Christian faith in the midst of a crooked and perverse world.
3. Waiting is not inactivity but serving the King while we have time. It is occupying (doing business) until He comes (Luke 19:13).
4. It also may mean suffering for His name’s sake; however, we also know that we are more than conquerors through Him and should expect to see many victories wrought through us.

The Amillennial View of Revelation 20



The Millennium is Christ's ruling now at the right hand of the Father in glory over all the earth by the Word and the Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:20–28; 50–58; Revelation 20:1–6).

The New Covenant (Gospel) Age is characterized by the church's preaching the gospel in all the world, suffering persecution and rejection, but living victoriously by the grace and power of God and with the presence of Christ in the Spirit (Matthew 28:18–20).

Christ will return at the end of the age to glorify His saints, destroy His enemies, judge the world, and usher in the New Creation (2 Peter 3:1–11).

1. An apostasy of great magnitude
 2. The man of sin revealed
 3. A period of great tribulation on earth
 4. The Day of the Lord ends it all
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12

Satan's final rebellion (Rev. 20:7–10)

The New Heavens and Earth

Satan bound in the abyss for "1000 years" then released for a short period (Revelation 20:1, 7)

The New Covenant (Gospel) Age began with Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension.

At Christ's coming, the saints will be raised, glorified, and gathered ("raptured") to the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18).



Christ's First Coming

The New Covenant/Gospel Age

Christ's Second Coming

The Old Heavens and Earth