

## The Thousand Years, Part 5: The Millennium (Revelation 20:1–8)

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### Introduction

1. We are now looking at the millennium as addressed in Revelation 20.
  - a. Last week we saw the binding of Satan.
  - b. Today we look nature of the millennial kingdom.
  - c. Next week we interpret the first resurrection.
  - d. Finally, we look at the release of Satan and the brief chaos to be ended by the return of Jesus Christ.
2. Note again the “Strong Points of the Amillennial Position” (Bobby Grow, Monergism.com)
  - a. It makes Christ the center.
  - b. It recognizes the universal scope of the Abrahamic Covenant for interpreting all biblical covenants.
  - c. It rightly orients salvation history to Christ instead of to the nation of Israel.
  - d. It sees but one “people of God.”
  - e. Its ethic is rooted in creation and “re-creation,” seeing the continuity between God’s redemptive work now and in the eternal state.
  - f. It emphasizes Christ as the focal point and mediator of all history.
  - g. It takes seriously the literary character of the Scriptures.
3. The millennium is now because God is sovereignly controlling all history in distinct but successive eschatological ages (Matt. 12:28; Luke 10:1–20; 17:20, 21; Rom. 14:17).
  - a. The Scripture refers to *two ages*, “*this age*” and “*the age to come*,” or the *already* and the *not yet* (Matt. 12:32; Luke 18:29, 30; 20:34–36).
  - b. This model fully explains the program of God for all creation and salvation history.
  - c. This model also makes all other interpretive models impossible.

### I. The Two-Age Model

1. This present time from the first coming of Christ is referred to as “this age.”
  - a. It is the age of redemption, the time that God is calling out a people for His name (Acts 15:14; 17:30, 31).
  - b. It is the age of the Spirit (Eph. 1:13, 14), which is why blasphemy against the Spirit cannot be forgiven (Matt. 12:32).
  - c. It is the time in which kingdom citizens *wait* for the age to come (Rom. 8:25; John 6:39, 40, 44, 54).
2. In a sense, the “*age to come*” is already present for believers.
  - a. This is seen in the tension between the *already* and *not yet*—we are already in the kingdom, but we also wait for it (Matt. 6:10).

- b. In other words, NT eschatology emphasizes that kingdom citizens now enjoy kingdom privileges as they wait for the consummation of all things into the full reality of the kingdom on the day of Christ.
- 3. Christ is presently seated at God's "*right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion . . . not only in this age but also in the one to come*" (Eph. 1:20, 21).
  - a. Nevertheless, while the kingdom is present, there is a continual struggle of loyalty between this temporal age and the coming eternal age.
    - 1) Because believers have eternal life, they must not be conformed to this age (Rom. 12:2, *world* is the Grk, *aion*, age).
    - 2) Although Christ is Lord, Satan is still the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4) of whom we must be wary, for he often presents himself and his agents as "*servants of righteousness*" (2 Cor. 11:14, 15).
    - 3) We must also resist the wisdom of this age because of its godless and pagan philosophy (1 Cor. 1:20) used by rulers who do not know the truth (1 Cor. 2:6–8).
  - b. The age to come, in which believers will fully realize their resurrected and glorified state, is the age of the fulfillment of all God's promises.
    - 1) It is an age not accessible to flesh and blood (1 Cor. 6:9, 10).
    - 2) It is an age to be enjoyed after resurrection, judgment, and restoration have occurred (1 Cor. 15:25–27).
    - 3) It is an eternal age where nothing temporal remains (Heb. 12:26–28).

## II. The Kingdom of God

- 1. John sees thrones and their occupants (v. 4; Dan. 7:9, 10).
  - a. The clause, "*judgment was given unto them,*" would be better translated "*judgment was rendered on their behalf*" (following the LXX version of Dan. 7:22).
  - b. These occupants are described as those who were martyred for their testimony and those who remain loyal to the Christ.
- 2. The kingdom is defined as God's sovereign rule over all things.
  - a. This kingdom is central to Christ's preaching (Mark 1:15).
  - b. The language of the kingdom underlines God's focus on both *law* and *gospel* as it relates to God creation.
  - c. Its arrival, continuance, and consummation are essential to biblical eschatology.
- 3. The whole of Isaiah anticipates the true and lasting kingdom of righteousness.
  - a. Israel proved unfaithful; Christ proved to be the true Israel, faithful in all His house.
  - b. "*Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore*" (Isa. 9:7).
- 4. Five signs that the kingdom is present in this age (Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, pp. 121ff).
  - a. Jesus cast out demons (Matt. 12:28).

- b. Satan fell from heaven and is bound (Luke 10:18; 2 Thess. 2:7).
- c. Jesus performed miracles (Matt. 11:4, 5).
- d. The gospel is preached to the poor (Matt. 11:5, 12).
- e. Jesus forgives sins (Isa. 33:24; Jer. 31:4; Mic. 7:19–20; Zech. 13:1; Mark 2:10).

### **Application**

1. This age refers to things *temporal*—things that perish so that the things eternal will remain.

For that reason, we are not to be conformed to the temporal and perishable things of this world (Rom. 12:1, 2).

2. The kingdom of God is not a place in a specific location, but it is the reign of Christ in the midst of His people while He makes His enemies His footstool.

Do you live as if Jesus were your Lord and King, or do you make your own choices?