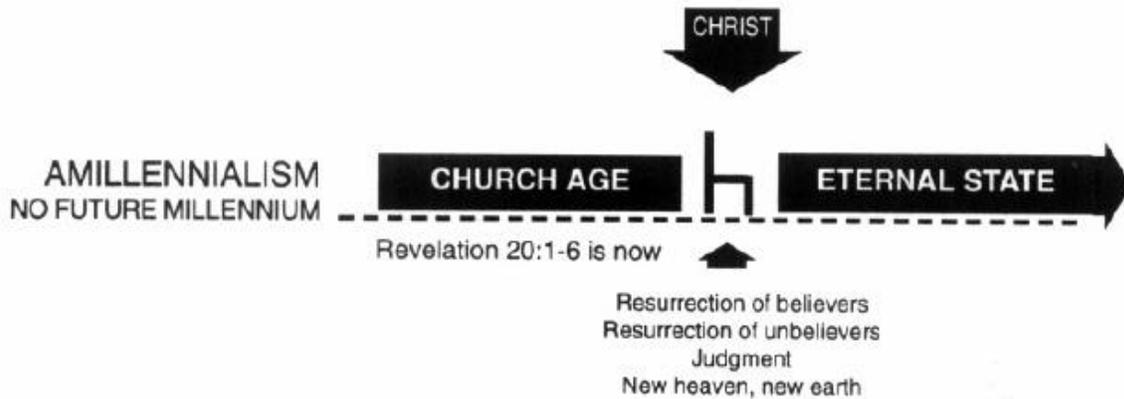


## Biblical Theology

### Unit 8: Doctrine of the Church – Lesson 2: The Millennium

#### Amillennialism

- Definition: The position that believes that the 1,000 reign of Christ is not to be taken literal but is to be understood as the present church age (there is no future earthly reign of Christ). Christ's return will lead directly into the final judgement and the new heavens and new earth.



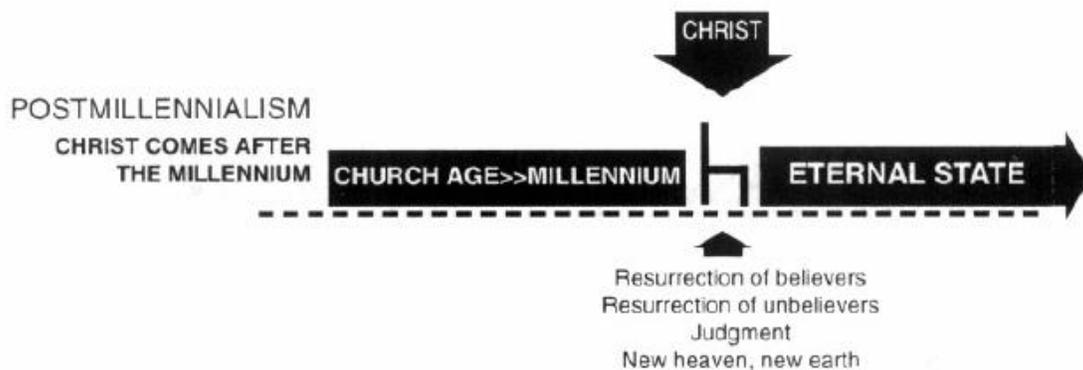
1. **Amillennial View: Satan was bound during Jesus' earthly ministry.**
  - **Revelation 20:1-2** - And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years..
  - **Luke 10:18** - "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.
2. **Amillennial View: The church is currently fulfilling the millennial reign of Christ.**
  - **Revelation 20:4-6** 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 share 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.
  - **1 Peter 2:9** - "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
3. **Amillennial View: The bible only teaches about one resurrection, not many.**
  - **John 5:28-29** - "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.
  - **Acts 24:15** - and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.
4. **Amillennial View: The concept of glorified believers living amongst sinners is too difficult to accept.**
5. **Amillennial View: There is no convincing purpose for a literal understanding of a 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth.**

- **Responses to Amillennial Position**

- It is difficult to empirically and biblically assert that Satan is currently bound, unable to influence the world. (1 Pt. 5:8; 2 Cor. 4:4)
- Passages referring to a single resurrection do not exclude the idea of separate resurrections or phases of resurrection.
- It is no more difficult to imagine glorified believers living amongst sinners than it is to accept that Jesus lived amongst sinners for forty days while he was in a glorified state.
- Though we may not know the full purpose of the millennial reign, we can trust that the Lord has a purpose in all that he does to bring about his greater glory. (It may also be argued, that God will completely fulfill his promises to Israel during the millennial reign.)

**Postmillennialism**

- Definition: The position that believes that the progress of the Gospel will increase until the entire world's population will be Christian. After 1,000 years (or so) of global, Christian prosperity and peace, Christ will return.



1. ***Postmillennial View: The Great Commission leads us to expect complete efficacy in all of the world.***
  - ***Matthew 28:18-20*** - Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
2. ***Postmillennial View: Jesus' parables lead us to expect the fullness of God's kingdom on earth.***
  - ***Matthew 13:31-32*** - He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."
  - ***Matthew 13:33*** - He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."
3. ***Satan will be bound for 1,000 years once Christianity has dominated the world.***
4. ***Postmillennial View: Holds a very optimistic view of the world.***

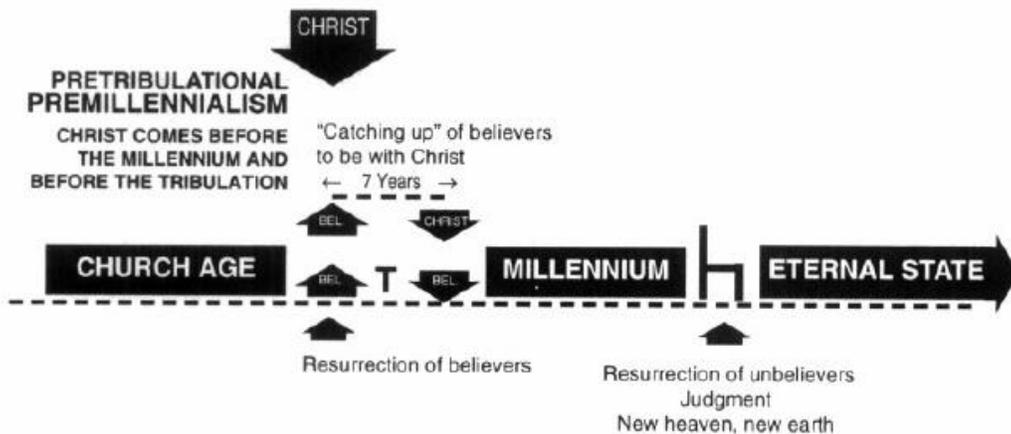
- **Responses to Postmillennial Position**

- The Great Commission speaks of authority given to believers, but does not necessarily imply Christ will convert the world population.
- Kingdom parables describe growth but do not conclusively assert world domination. (Matt. 7:13-14)
- Though an optimistic view of the world is healthy, it is difficult to empirically or biblically assert that the earth is getting better prior to Christ's return (2 Tim. 3:1-5; Mk. 13:7-8).

## Premillennialism

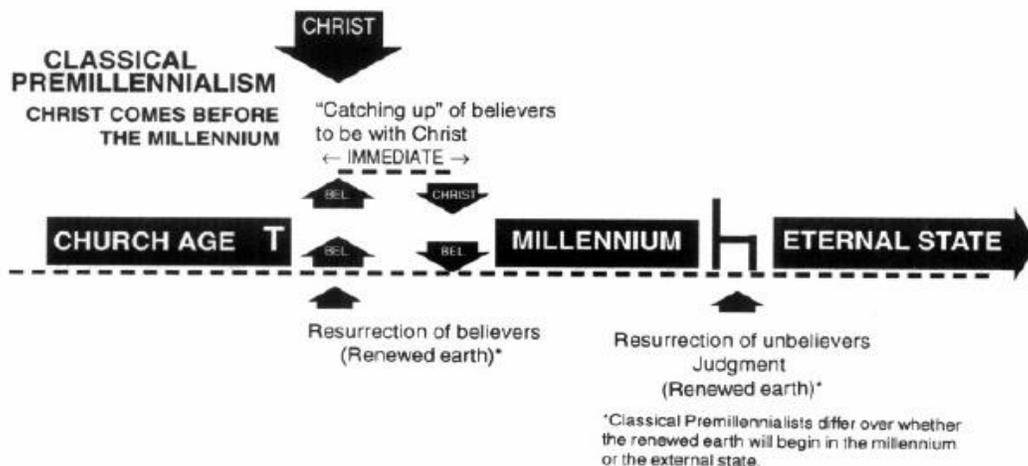
- Definition: The position that believes that Christ will come back before a literal 1,000 year earthly reign where Christ will be physically present on the earth and will rule with resurrected / glorified believers.

1. **Premillennial View: The most responsible treatment of Revelation 20 is to interpret it literally.**
2. **Premillennial View: Satan will be bound and unable to influence the nations during the millennium.**
3. **Premillennial View: Some premillennialists believe the church will be raptured prior to a seven year tribulation.**



- Sees Christ return in two phases: 1) Rapture and 2) Christ’s second coming.
- Believes the tribulation will last seven years (Dan. 9:27).
- Sees the tribulation to be a period when God pours out his wrath:
  - Point is to bring Israel to repentance (Matt. 23:37-39; Zech. 13:8-9)
  - Bible indicates that the church will be spared (1 Thess. 1:10, 5:9; Rev. 3:10-11)

4. **Premillennial View: Some premillennialists believe the church will be raptured after the tribulation.**



- Sees the rapture and Christ's second coming as a single event (Matt. 24:31; 2 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51-52).
- Sees the tribulation as a period of time signaling the nearness of Christ's return, but not necessarily lasting seven years.

**5. *Premillennial View: Some premillennialists believe the church will be raptured during the tribulation.***

- Sees the tribulation separated into two halves:
  - First half: wrath of man (man-made cataclysm)
  - Second half: wrath of God.
- Believe the church will be raptured half-way through the tribulation (Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7).
- Though the scriptures may describe the tribulation in two halves, there is nothing to indicate that believers will be raptured between these halves.

**Conclusion**

- Though Christians debate the timing and details of the rapture, tribulation, and millennial reign, all Christians agree that Christ will return to establish his reign and finally judge Satan and unbelievers. We must be ready at any moment for the consummation of Christ's plan and his eternal reign.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Has this lesson affected your view on the details of Christ's return? If so, how?
2. How does your view of the millennium affect your day-to-day Christian life today?

**Reading Assignment**

*Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 56: The Final Judgement and Eternal Punishment*

*Suggested: Watch a passionate but friendly debate between a premillennialist, postmillennialist, and amillennialist on YouTube. Search: An Evening of Eschatology - Piper, Hamilton, Wilson, Storms.*