



End Times Made Easy

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| Mysteries, Myths & Man-made Muddles!

1 Introduction

As we have noted elsewhere, studies of the End Times have led to considerable confusion and controversy amongst Christians over the centuries! Nowhere is the debate more intense than in questions about “the Millennium”. Rodman Williams writes that: “it hardly needs saying that the question of the Millennium has been one of the most perplexing biblical and theological issues in the history of Christendom.”¹

Theories, opinions and views about this subject vary greatly and – whether we realize it or not – affect our approach to and beliefs about many other aspects of theology and doctrine, as well as our practice and priorities. In fact, as we shall see, our view of the Millennium inevitably affects our thinking about:

- **The state of the world when Jesus returns:** will Jesus return to a world in which Christianity is flourishing? Or to a remnant of believers?
- **The nature of the Kingdom of God:** is the kingdom a present reality? or is it all still to come? Will it be a literal earthly kingdom or is it a spiritual thing?
- **The purpose and destiny of Israel²:** does God have a ‘separate’ plan for the Jews, as distinct from the (mainly-Gentile) church? Or should we regard His purposes as being inclusive and fully-integrated?
- **The purpose and destiny of the Church:** what is the purpose and position of the church in the final end-time events?
- **The nature of the resurrection:** will all the dead be raised at the same time or will believers be raised sooner than unbelievers?
- **The tribulation:** will there be a time of suffering and persecution of believers before Christ returns? And, if so, will believers live through such times?

As Sproul says: “The differences displayed among the various millennial schools go far beyond their understanding of the Millennium itself. The differences are systematic and extend to every aspect of eschatology.”³

¹ J Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*, Vol 3, Zondervan, 1992, p421

² Throughout this section, references to Israel are to ‘natural’ or ‘ethnic’ Israel – that is, to the Jewish people.

³ RC Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1998, p201

| 2 What is the 'Millennium'

In **Revelation chapter 20** the apostle John describes a vision in which he sees:

1. Satan is bound and thrown into the Abyss for a “thousand years” (or ‘Millennium’⁴) so that he cannot deceive the nations **(20:1-3)**;
2. Faithful Christian martyrs are resurrected and reign with Christ for a thousand years **(20:4-6)**;
3. At the end of the thousand years Satan is released for a short time to deceive the nations again and to gather them for a final battle against God’s people⁵ **(20:7-9)**;
4. God destroys Satan’s armies and throws Satan into the lake of burning sulphur **(20:9-10)**; and
5. The dead are judged before the great white throne **(20:11-15)**

In summary, **Rev 20** describes a Millennium period during which Satan will be bound and believers will reign with Christ! The question is: What does this mean and when will it happen in relation to the other end time events? Let’s consider some basic positions...

⁴ “Millennium” is simply the Latin term for 1000 years.

⁵ Rev 20:8 describes the armies gathered for battle as “Gog and Magog”; these can be understood simply as representing all the forces of evil. Ezekiel chs 38-39 refers to “Gog, of the land of Magog” (Ez 38:1) as the leader of forces ranged against Israel.

3 Four Basic Views

Theologians have varying views of the position and nature of the Millennium in the end times. Central to the debate are the following questions: Is the millennium a current or future time? Is the millennium literal or figurative? Will Jesus return before or after the millennium? (or, to put it another way, does the millennium take place *after* or *before* His return?)

There are three basic starting-points:

1. The **“A-MILLENNIAL”** view is that the millennium is the current age, and (therefore) that Jesus will return after it has finished.
2. The **“POST-MILLENNIAL”** view is that the millennium is a future event/era, and that Jesus will return *after* it has taken place.
3. The **“PRE-MILLENNIAL”** view is that the millennium is a future event/era, and that Jesus will return *before* it takes place.

However, we must also identify a particular form of pre-millennialism which has become popular in the last century and can therefore be regarded as a fourth position in its own right:

4. This **“DISPENSATIONAL”** view is that the millennium is a future event/era, that Jesus will return before it takes place, and that God will accomplish different purposes for Israel and for the Church.

We can now look in more detail at each of the four viewpoints, and will then try and evaluate the relative Biblical merits of each:

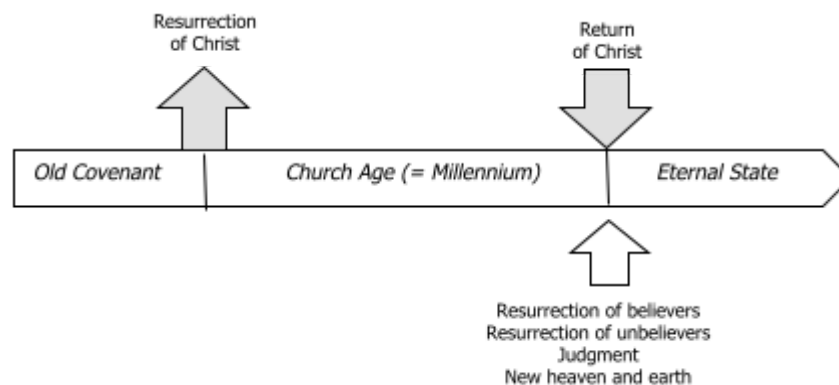
4 The Millennial Views Explained!...

4.1 Amillennialism

4.1.1 Summary

The Amillennial position is that [Rev 20:1-10](#) describes the *present* Church Age rather than any *future* millennium period. Amillennialists believe that we are already in the millennium: it is *now!*

The Amillennial position can be shown as follows:



4.1.2 Detailed Scheme

Amillennialists believe in the following sequence of events:

1. The **current 'church age' is the millennium** described in [Rev 20](#). It is an age in which Satan's influence over the nations has been greatly reduced so that the gospel can be preached. However, forces of evil will also increase during this age.
2. Those reigning with Christ are believers who have already died and whose spirits are with Christ in heaven.
3. The "thousand years" is to be understood figuratively as a long period of time in which God's purposes will be accomplished.
4. At the end of this present church age **Christ will return**. Some believe that there will be no 'signs' of Christ's return, whereas others believe

that Christ will return after a time of **tribulation** and apostasy, the conversion of the Jews and the gospel has been reached to all nations.

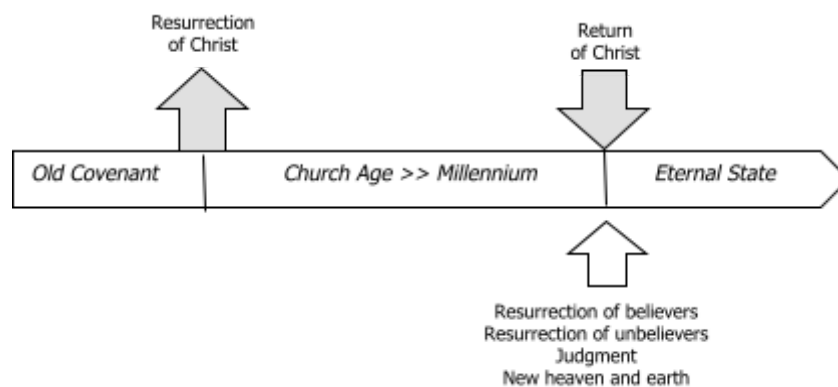
5. There will then be a **'general resurrection'** of both believers and unbelievers: the bodies of believers will rise to be reunited with their spirits and to enjoy eternal life; unbelievers will be raised to face Judgment and eternal condemnation.
6. The **final Judgment** will follow.
7. Then the **new heaven and new earth** will appear and the **eternal state** will commence and continue forever.

4.2 Post-millennialism

4.2.1 Summary

The Post-Millennialist position is that the millennium is a **yet-to-come era of widespread righteousness, peace and spiritual blessing, after which Christ will return.** Postmillennialism is therefore very optimistic about the power of the gospel to change lives and influence society.

The postmillennial position can be shown as follows:



4.2.2 Detailed Scheme

Postmillennialists believe in the following sequence of events:

1. The **current church age** will result in the successful advance of the gospel, a growing church and a significant Christian impact and influence on society. The Kingdom of God is seen as a present reality

and is spiritual in character, and the church is the divine institution to advance the kingdom and affect the coming of Christ.

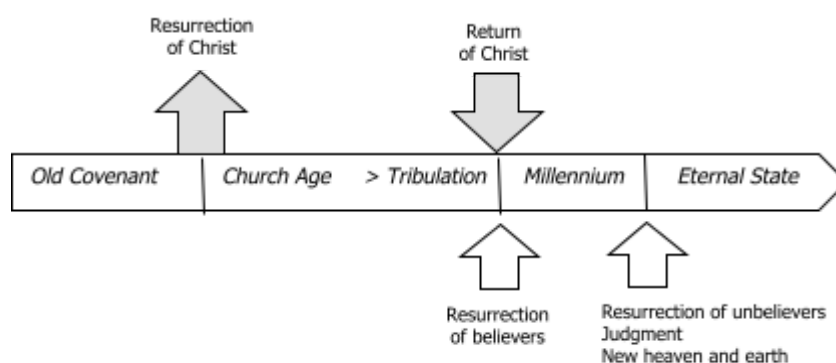
2. Gradually, **a millennial age** of peace and righteousness will occur on the earth; a period of virtual triumph of true Christianity. During the millennium the world will be evangelized, the Jews will be converted in great numbers and the church will be established in purity. This millennium may be a literal thousand years, or simply a long period of time, prior to Christ's return.
3. Some believe that a time of great apostasy will occur either before or after this golden age.
4. **Christ will return** after this millennium age.
5. At Christ's return there will be a **general resurrection** of both believers and unbelievers.
6. The **final Judgment** will follow.
7. Then the **new heaven and new earth** will appear and the **eternal state** will commence and continue forever.

4.3 Pre-millennialism

4.3.1 Summary

The historic (or classic) premillennial position is that Christ will return and then reign on the earth for a thousand years with the Church (Jewish and Gentile believers from all ages), which it regards as the 'new Israel'. The Final Judgement will then take place after the millennium. Central to this premillennial position is the idea that *the resurrection of the dead occurs in two phases*: believers being raised when Christ returns, and unbelievers a thousand years later.

The premillennialist position can be shown as follows:





4.3.2 Detailed Scheme

Premillennialists believe in the following sequence of events:

1. The present **church age** will continue but there will be an increase in the suffering and persecution of believers, leading to the rise of Antichrist, and a period of **great tribulation**.
2. After the tribulation, **Christ will return** to earth to establish a millennial kingdom.
3. At the return of Christ, **believers** who have died **will be resurrected**
4. Resurrected believers, together with believers alive at His return, will enjoy a **millennial reign** with Christ on earth⁶, establishing His kingdom which will last one thousand years (some premillennialists regard this as literal, others as symbolic of a long period of time).
5. During this millennium Satan will be bound, Jerusalem will be rebuilt, many unbelievers will be saved, and there will be universal peace.
6. At the end of millennium, **Satan will be loosed** and will gather those who have yet to submit to Christ for a final battle in which they will be decisively defeated.
7. Then **unbelievers will be resurrected**
8. The **final judgement** will follow
9. Then the **new heaven and new earth** will appear⁷ and the **eternal state** will commence and continue forever.

4.4 Dispensationalism

4.4.1 Summary

The dispensational position is that Christ will return not only before the millennium, but also *before the great tribulation*. According to this view, *Christ's return will be in 2 stages* (effectively there will be 2 returns): the first will be a 'secret' return before the tribulation, when He will come to take believers out of the world ("the rapture"); then He will return a second time, after the tribulation (seven years later), when He will come to establish His millennial kingdom on earth.

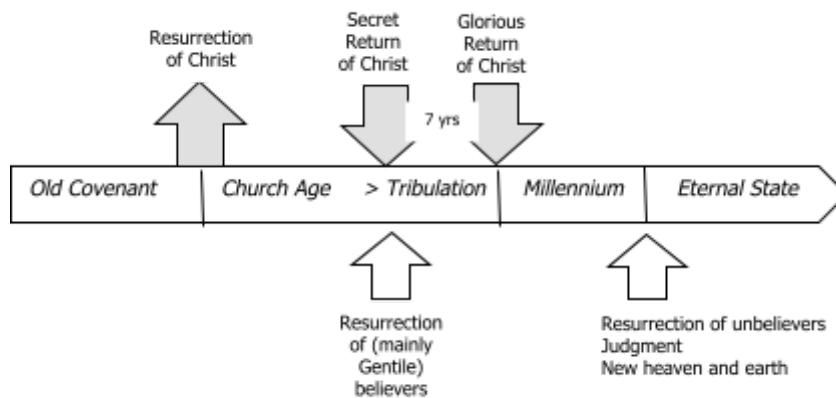
⁶ During this millennial reign, the resurrected believers and those alive at Christ's return will all receive glorified resurrection bodies.

⁷ Some premillennialists believe that the new heavens and earth will appear *during the millennium*.

Dispensationalism is a more recent version of Pre-Millennialism. It first appeared in nineteenth century England and was widely advocated by the Plymouth Brethren. It was first popularized by *The Schofield Reference Bible* in 1909, and is now a widely-held view amongst many evangelical Christians.

A key feature of Dispensationalism is the idea that history is divided into different dispensations, and that God fulfils a different purpose in each of these different dispensations⁸. The Millennium is viewed as the final dispensation, which will follow the present dispensation of the church.

The dispensational position can be shown as follows:



4.4.2 Detailed Scheme

Dispensationalists believe in the following sequence of events:

1. The present **church age** will continue until suddenly, unexpectedly, and **secretly, Christ will return**. There are no predicted events which must first be fulfilled.
2. He will return part-way to earth and will gather believers to Himself, who will meet Him in the air (**the “rapture”**). Christ will then return to heaven with the believers who have been removed from the earth.

⁸ There are believed to be 7 dispensations/ages, each identified with a different era of human history: (1) INNOCENCY (creation to fall); (2) CONSCIENCE (fall to flood); (3) HUMAN GOVERNMENT (Flood to Tower of Babel); (4) PROMISE (Patriarchs to Moses); (5) LAW (Moses to Christ); (6) GRACE (Christ to the Millennium); (7) KINGDOM (the thousand year Millennial period)



3. Then will then be a **great tribulation** on the earth for a period of 7 years⁹. During this time of tribulation, many of the ‘signs’ predicted to precede Christ’s return will be fulfilled: the Jews will turn to Christ, the gospel will be preached by these newly-believing Jews and there will be widespread salvation before Antichrist is revealed.
4. Then, at the end of 7 years, **Christ will return to earth again**, this time publicly and gloriously (with his saints), to destroy Antichrist and establish His kingdom.
5. Satan will be bound and Jesus will begin a **millennial reign** on earth. Christ will be enthroned in Jerusalem, where the temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices will be resumed. The Jews will be the only natural citizens of the Kingdom; the Gentiles being adopted in. Universal peace and prosperity will prevail and the world will be converted.
6. At the end of the millennium, **Satan will be loosed** for a short time, but will then defeated and cast into the lake of fire.
7. Then **unbelievers will be resurrected**.
8. The **final judgment** will follow.
9. Then the **new heaven and new earth** will appear and the **eternal state** will commence and continue forever.

4.4.3 Israel and the Church

A unique and distinguishing feature of dispensationalism is the maintaining of a clear distinction between the Church and Israel. Dispensationalists argue that God has *a different plan for the Jewish nation on the one hand and for the Gentile church on the other*. The Church is regarded as being a ‘parenthesis’ in God’s purpose for the Jewish nation. The argument is that Israel was the provisional expression of the Kingdom of God, but was overthrown because of unbelief: that is, when Christ came to re-establish the Kingdom the Jews rejected Him and God’s plan was interrupted. Jesus will therefore return again to re-establish His Kingdom amongst the Jews.

As a result of Israel’s rejection of Christ, the church was established. The church, however, is regarded as a ‘parenthesis’ in the history of the kingdom: Dispensationalists argue that the church has no connection with the Kingdom and was unknown to the OT prophets. The church is therefore seen as an

⁹ Another variation of dispensationalism (known as the “midtribulation rapture” view) is that Christ returns not *before* the tribulation starts, begins, but rather *mid-way through it* to rescue believers who are suffering. After this there will be a further 3½ years of tribulation on the earth.

unexpected phase in history which has resulted in a ‘bonus’ of grace for the nations.

In keeping with this distinction, dispensationalists apply a very literal interpretation to OT prophecies concerning Israel: they regard them as being fulfilled *only amongst natural Israel*, and not to be ‘spiritualised’ by finding their fulfillment in the church. Dispensationalists see an earthly millennial reign of Christ as being essential to the fulfillment of OT prophecies about the kingdom.

Accordingly, in the dispensational view of the End Times, God is seen to take the Church out of the world (by means of the secret rapture) before the widespread conversion of the Jewish people and their reigning on earth with Christ during the millennium. In this way, ethnic Israel will reign on earth as God’s people and enjoy *earthly blessings*, whilst the Church, having been raptured before the tribulation and millennium, will enjoy *heavenly blessings*. Indeed, the dispensational view is that the OT prophecies concerning Israel will be fulfilled in the millennium by believing Jews who will reign with Christ in the land of Israel as a ‘model nation’.

4.5 Summary of Key Features

We can now summarise the above by highlighting the key features of each of the 4 main positions:

The 4 Millennium Views: Key Features	
<i>Jesus returns after a millennium...</i>	<i>Jesus returns before a millennium...</i>
<p>Amillennialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Millennium is current ● Millennium is figurative ● Kingdom of God is spiritual ● Believers will endure tribulation ● One-stage return of Christ ● General resurrection of all men at the same time ● Judgment follows Christ’s return immediately 	<p>Pre-millennialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Millennium is future ● Millennium is figurative or literal ● Kingdom of God is spiritual or earthly ● Believers will endure tribulation ● Two-stage return of Christ ● Separate resurrections of believers and unbelievers ● Judgment follows the Millennium



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pessimistic about the prospects of the Gospel to change society
<p>Post-millennialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Millennium is future ● Millennium is figurative or literal ● Kingdom of God is spiritual ● Believers will endure tribulation ● One-stage return of Christ ● General resurrection of all men at the same time ● Judgment follows Christ’s return immediately ● Optimistic about the prospects of the Gospel to change society 	<p>Dispensationalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Millennium is future ● Millennium is literal ● Kingdom of God is earthly ● Believers will escape tribulation ● Two-stage return of Christ ● Separate resurrections of believers and unbelievers ● Judgment follows the Millennium ● Pessimistic about the prospects of the Gospel to change society ● Separate destinies for Israel and the Church

5 Which View Should We Take!?

Each of these four main viewpoints has its advocates¹⁰. Vast amounts of literature have been written to defend or challenge each of the viewpoints. All we seek to do here, therefore, is to try and summarise the main Biblical arguments put forward by each group, and then to arrive at a sensible evaluation of the Biblical evidence.

5.1 Arguments for the Amillennial Position

The main arguments put forward by the Amillennialists are:

1. Only six verses in the whole of the Bible ([Rev 20:1-6](#)) make any reference to an apparent future earthly millennial rule of Christ, and that passage is itself obscure. Therefore, we simply cannot base a major doctrine on such a passage.
2. The “binding of Satan” ([Rev 20:1-2](#)) is not some future event but rather the binding that occurred during Jesus’s earthly ministry ([Mt 12:28-29](#), [Lk 10:18](#)), so that the gospel could be proclaimed with power. Similarly, the casting of Satan into the abyss ([Rev 20:3](#)) is seen as a reference to the deposing of Satan that occurred on the cross (see [Jn 1:31-32](#)) so that, he can no longer prevent people choosing for Christ¹¹.
3. The loosing of Satan for a short time ([Rev 20:3](#)) is seen to refer to the time of evil (or the great tribulation) at the end of the gospel age (see the sequence Jesus describes in [Mt 24:14-15](#)).
4. The vision of martyrs “reigning with Christ” ([Rev 20:4](#)) is a scene in heaven (not on earth), which is why John says he saw *the souls* of the martyrs (rather than their physical bodies). Indeed, [Rev 20:4-6](#) says nothing about Christ reigning *on earth*. It describes the believers

¹⁰ For example, **Amillennialists** include: Augustine (354-430), Louis Berkhof (1873-1957), William Hendricksen and J Rodman Williams. **Postmillennialists** include: John Calvin (1509-1564), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), AH Strong, Kenneth L Gentry Jr, Gary North and David Chilton. These latter two are particularly associated with a recent Postmillennialism movement known as “Reconstructionism” or “Dominion Theology” (being an emphasis on the belief that before Christ returns every area of life will be redeemed and placed under the Lordship of Christ and the rule of the Kingdom). **Historic Premillennialists** include Justin Martyr (b c.100), Irenaeus (130-202), RA Torrey (1856-1928), George Eldon Ladd (1911-1982) and Wayne Grudem. **Dispensationalists** include: JN Darby (1800-1882), Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952) and Hal Lindsey (1929-).

¹¹ “It is important to realise that this casting out of Satan, his being shut and sealed in the pit, and his inability to deceive the nations relates essentially to only one thing: the proclamation of the gospel. Satan may, and does, continue to pervert mankind...but none of this can really hold-out against the powerful gospel witness. In that all-important matter Satan is totally impotent” J Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: Systematic Theology from a Charismatic Perspective*, Vol 3, Zondervan, 1992, p425

reigning with Christ but doesn't say where this will be; the obvious explanation is that it will be a reigning in heaven rather than on earth.

5. Elsewhere ([Jn 5:28-29](#), [Acts 24:15](#), [Dan 12:2](#)), the Bible clearly teaches only one resurrection rather than two (the Premillennial/Dispensational view), at which both believers and unbelievers will be raised to life.
6. The "first resurrection" ([Rev 20:5](#)) experienced by these martyred believers is a reference to their spiritual ascension into heaven to be with the Lord at the time of their death, rather than to any physical bodily resurrection.
7. Elsewhere, the Bible clearly teaches that the final judgment will take place immediately after the return of Christ, and not that there might be a millennial era in between His return and the final judgment (the Premillennial/Dispensational view).
8. The idea of glorified believers (with resurrection bodies!) and sinners living on earth together (the Premillennial/Dispensational view) is unacceptable. Similarly, if Christ comes in glory to reign on earth for a millennium, it seems highly unlikely that unbelievers would persist in their sins and that evil could continue to grow on the earth (the Premillennial/Dispensational view) such that Satan could – at the end of a thousand years – gather countless multitudes for a final battle against God ([Rev 20:7-9](#)). Rather, the battle described here must surely be the *same battle* described in [Rev 16:14-16](#) – that is, a final battle *at the end of this present age*.
9. There seems to be no convincing *purpose* for a future millennium: once the church age has ended and Christ has returned, then what is the reason for delaying the final judgment and the start of the eternal state?

5.2 Arguments for the Post-millennial Position

The main arguments put forward by the Postmillennialists (in addition to some of those outlined in 5.1 above) are:

1. The Great Commission ([Mt 28:18-20](#), [Mk 16:15-18](#)) leads us to expect that with Christ's authority and His promise to fulfil His word, the gospel will go forth in power and eventually result in a largely Christian world.
2. Various parables of the gradual growth of the kingdom (eg [Mt 13:31-32](#)) suggest that it will eventually fill the earth with its influence.



3. The empirical evidence is that the church is indeed growing and spreading throughout the world, and – even where Christians are persecuted – the gospel is advancing rapidly by the power of God¹².

5.3 Arguments for the Pre-millennial Position

The main arguments put forward by the premillennialists are:

1. A plain, straightforward and chronological reading of [Rev 20:1-6](#) leads (only) to the premillennial viewpoint: Satan will be bound for 1000 years; Christ will reign for a thousand years; there will be a “first resurrection” of believers and a subsequent second resurrection (of unbelievers) at the end of the 1000 years.
2. If [Rev 20](#) is taken as following chronologically from [Rev 19](#), and [chapter 19](#) is taken as a description of the return of Christ, then it follows that the millennium described in [chapter 20](#) must take place after Christ’s return.
3. The “binding of Satan” referred to in [Rev 20](#) seems to describe something far more extensive than is the case in the current church age. [Rev 20](#) shows him rendered powerless to influence the world in any way, whereas in the current church age Satan’s activity is still very strong ([2Co 4:4](#), [Eph 6:12](#), [1Pe 5:8](#), [1Jn 4:3](#), [5:19](#)). It must therefore refer to a future age.
4. Although the church may be growing in the world, the world is also becoming more evil ([2Ti 3:1-5](#)), and the idea of a Christianized world (the Postmillennial view) therefore seems unrealistic.
5. Other passages speak of a future period that is far greater than the present age, but still falls short of the eternal state (eg [Ps 72:8-14](#), [Isa 11:2-9](#), [1Co 15:24](#)).

5.4 Arguments for the Dispensational Position

The main arguments put forward by the dispensationalists (in addition to those of the more historic premillennial position outlined above) are:

¹² Eg: Wayne Grudem cites statistics showing that between 1950 and 1992 Bible-believing Christians went from 3% to 10% of the world’s population, which was a numerical increase from 80 million to 540 million. More recent statistics suggest the current number of believers is around 1000 million (more than 15% of the world’s population).



1. **1 Thess 4:17** says that believers will be “caught up...to meet the Lord in the air”, giving the idea that we will be raptured.
2. Since the great tribulation will involve the outpouring of God’s wrath¹³ it would be inappropriate for Christians to be on earth at that time. In addition, **Rev 3:10** indicates that the church might be taken out of the world before “the hour of trial” that will come.
3. A dispensational view makes it possible to believe both that Christ could come at any moment (His first, pre-tribulation coming) and also that there are signs that must be fulfilled before He comes (which would be fulfilled during the tribulation, before His second glorious appearing).

¹³ The tribulation is a time involving a multiplication of wickedness, persecution and suffering not just an outpouring of the wrath of God

6 Which View Should We Take!?

In evaluating the various positions, *we must refer back to the essential principles of Bible interpretation* outlined in earlier sessions. That is, we must:

- interpret the difficult and obscure in the light of the clear
- interpret the figurative in the light of the literal
- interpret the detailed in the light of the general

On the basis of these principles we can now evaluate the meaning of [Rev 20](#) in the light of other clearer, more literal or more general (mainly New Testament) passages, and make the following comments:

1. **The NT does not say that believers will be taken out of the world before the tribulation.** Although Jesus promises we will be taken up to be with Him ([Jn 14:3](#)), and Paul says we will meet Him in the air ([1Th 4:17](#)) and receive resurrection bodies ([1Co 15:51-52](#)) none of these passages are to imply a secret rapture before the tribulation, but rather a visible, public ‘rapture’ when He comes in glory. Indeed [1Th 4:16-17](#) makes it clear that at the time we are caught up (raptured) He will have come “with a cry...with the archangel’s call...and with the sound of the trumpet of God” – hardly a ‘secret’ appearing!
2. **The NT makes it clear that believers will live through the times of great tribulation.** Nowhere does scripture support the idea that Christians will not go through times of suffering, trial and tribulation. In [Mt 24:17-25](#) Jesus gives clear warnings about the coming tribulation, and gives advice and encouragement to believers about how to handle such times. There is no suggestion that believers will be removed from the world before such times. Indeed, He makes the specific point that “for the sake of the elect” such times will be cut short ([Mt 24:22](#)). Moreover, in [Rev 7:14](#) the great multitude around the throne are identified as those “who have come out of the great tribulation”, rather than those who have escaped the tribulation altogether.
3. **There is no suggestion anywhere in the Bible that Christ’s return will be in two stages!** Not a single reference to His return seems to suggest and other than it will be a single public and glorious event! ([see Mt 24:27,30](#)).



4. **Jesus clearly says that He will return *after* the great tribulation (Mt 24:29-30)** and not before it!
5. **The gospels tell us that Satan is *already* bound (see Mt 12:29, Lk 10:18)**, and can no longer deceive the Gentiles as he did before Pentecost. In this respect He also said that the Kingdom has *already come* (Mt 12:28). Paul describes the “man of lawlessness” as being currently “held back” (2Th 2:6). Jesus began to bind Satan when He defeated him in the wilderness (Lk 4:1-13); He continued during His ministry as demons were cast out repeatedly; and He “destroyed” him (Heb 2:14, NASB: “rendered powerless”) through His death and resurrection. Therefore, throughout the church age Satan has remained bound: this is not to say that he is inactive, rather that he lacks full power to keep people from responding to the truth.
6. **The use of symbolic numbers throughout Revelation mean there is no reason why this time-period of a thousand years should be taken literally.** Rather, it is more consistent with the idea of the reign of Christ and His people being for a long yet discrete period of time. As noted elsewhere, the whole of Revelation is written in the apocalyptic genre and should not therefore be interpreted literally.
7. **The Bible speaks only of two ages: the “present age” (the church age) and “the age to come” (the eternal state), eg see Mt 12:32, Mk 10:30, Eph 1:21, Heb 6:5.** Nowhere is there any mention of a ‘third’ or ‘interim’ millennial age coming between this present age and the age to come.
8. **Elsewhere, the NT makes it clear that the return of Christ will be followed immediately by the destruction of evil, the final judgment and the beginning of the new age.** Nowhere in the other NT passages is there any indication of a millennial period between Christ’s return and these other events. **See Mt 25:31ff, 1Th 4:17, 2 Pe 3:3-18**
9. **Elsewhere, the Bible clearly teaches that there will be a single resurrection** of both believers and unbelievers on the day of the Lord (Jn 5:28-29, Acts 24:15, Dan 12:2).
10. **Rev 20 should not be regarded as fitting chronologically after Rev 19.** It is a succeeding vision rather than a succeeding time-period. Revelation is not a chronological prophecy of history! Our previous overview of Revelation suggested various ‘repeats’ throughout the book. Indeed, **Rev 20 cannot** follow chronologically from **Rev 19:11-21** because **19:21** speaks of the destruction of all nations: in this case, there would be no nations left for Satan not to deceive (**20:1-3**) or from whom Satan could gather an army (**20:7-9**)
11. **The Bible does not support a distinction between Israel and the Church.** Rather, the view of the NT writers is that the Church is the ‘new Israel’ or ‘spiritual Israel’ (**Ro 2:28-29, Ro 9:6-8, Gal 3:29, Phil 3:3**) and



constitutes Jewish and Gentile believers (from both OT and NT). Whilst a future, large-scale conversion of Jews is expected ([Ro 11:12, 15, 23-31](#)) these Jewish believers will be “grafted back into their own olive tree” ([Ro 11:24](#)) to become part of the universal Body of Christ. Rather than being a ‘parenthesis’ (or interruption) in God’s plan, the present church age – which has brought the salvation of millions of Gentiles – is a fundamental part of the eternal Divine plan and purpose of God to have a people for Himself from every tribe and nation ([Ge 1:28, Ge 12:2-3, Mt 28:19, Rev 5:9](#)).

Therefore, the NT writers had no difficulty in understanding that the OT prophecies (to Israel) are properly applied *by the church* (eg [Ro 9:25](#) which quotes [Hos 2:23, Heb 8:8-10](#) which quotes [Jer 31:31-34](#)) – the church is now God’s chosen people! Peter confirms this when he says that God has bestowed on the church all the blessings promised to Israel in the OT ([see 1Pe 2:4-10](#))

When Jews are saved in large numbers in the future they will not constitute a *separate* people of God, but will become part of the church. Similarly, Paul makes it clear to the Ephesus that God has united Jews and Gentiles into one new body ([Eph 2:12-16](#)), and the Gentiles are “fellow-heirs, members of the same body” ([Eph 3:6](#)). It is clear from the NT that the church has become the true ‘Israel of God’ and will receive all the blessings promised to Israel in the OT.

12. The Great Commission, the parables of an ever-increasing Kingdom, and the promise of the Restoration of all things leave us optimistic about the power of the Gospel to transform lives and influence society

On the basis of the above, we would ‘reject’ the premillennial and dispensational views and accept the amillennialist position (or a postmillennial position in which the thousand years is seen as figurative rather than literal).

However, different view about the Millennium should not cause division or controversy. **Whatever view people take, the crucial, wonderful and unifying truth is that CHRIST WILL RETURN, DEFEAT SATAN, AND REIGN FOREVER!**