

Biblical Doctrine of the Millennium

Part 2

Postmillennialism – This view of the millennium is based on a belief that the preaching of the gospel will bring the earthly reign of the Messiah, based on an interpretation of Ps 47, 72, 100; Isa 45:22-25, Hos 2:23 that all nations will come to know the Lord by the success of the great commission of Mt 28:18-20. The millennium is seen as the extended church age but not necessarily a literal thousand years. In this view the Kingdom gradually emerges as more and more people come to know Christ. This view has not been popular over the last century since Christianity has continued to lose ground to other religions such as Islam. This view is inconsistent with end time apostasy presented in Jesus' teaching in Luke 17:26-30 and Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Premillennialism – The millennium will be initiated by the return of Christ who may come at any moment. He will set up a literal early kingdom on earth for a literal thousand year period after which Satan and the forces of evil will be fully and finally deposed and disposed to eternal punishment in the lake of fire. This has been the most popular view among theologically conservative students of the Bible. It is based on a literal interpretation of Revelation 20:4-6, which states the millennium will begin with the second coming of the Messiah. His kingdom will be one of perfect peace, justice, and righteousness in which all creation will again be in harmony, see e.g. Isa 11:6-7; 65:25; Rom 8:19-23. Dispensational pre-millennialists believe that all of human history falls into seven dispensations illustrated by the seven churches of Revelation 2:1 to 3:22. This view represents the most literal and biblical view of the end times, see e.g. Mt 24:1-51; Mk 13:1-37; Lk 21:7-38; Rev 18:1-20:15.

Amillennialism – Those who hold this view believe that the millennium is symbolic and not literal. The Kingdom of God commenced when Jesus set up His spiritual kingdom during His earthly ministry. Therefore there is no literal thousand year earthly reign of Christ but the reign of Christ is established now in His Church and its witness on earth. The entire Book of Revelation is viewed as symbolic of the struggle and triumph of the forces of good over evil at the consummation of human history. Christ will return and all persons will be ushered into the eternal state to one of two destinations. This view arbitrarily dismisses the literalness of Scripture that Jesus expressed in Matthew 24:1-51 and 25:1-46. It also does not adequately distinguish between the resurrection at Christ's return in 2 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and the first resurrection and second resurrections of Revelation 20:5-6 and 20:11-14 nor the first and second death of 20:6 and 20:14-15.

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