



THE
MILLENNIUM:

TRUE OR FALSE?

The Millennium: True or False?

We're going to look at a subject that has been debated for centuries--the doctrine of the "millennium" more specifically the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth.

Before we begin, we must clarify what the term millennium is. It's commonly referred to as the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ on the earth. I want to emphasize the words **on the earth**, for Jesus Christ already reigns, He always has, does, and always will. What is meant by the millennium is this--a thousand year reign, by Christ Himself with a visible throne on the earth apart and distinct from His heavenly reign at present.

In studying this doctrine there must be one sole, single, and authoritative source of which to prove whether or not this doctrine is true--the Bible God's Holy Word. I personally do not hold to or follow the idea of allegorizing or spiritualizing all of scripture. What is spiritual is spiritual what is literal is literal. We cannot use the early Church, although we will show at the end of the article after the Scriptures have determined it to be true or not, what they believed.

No other source can be consulted to prove this doctrine. It must solely come from the pages of Scripture itself. For no doctrine can be a doctrine if God's Word does not teach it. We cannot rely on so-called theologians, for most of the time they are taught in their denominational seminaries the position of what their denomination teaches, for example, most Baptists, and some non-denominational fellowships such as Calvary Chapel, teach pre-millennial. The Reformed fellowships teach a-millennial. Still, others teach post-millennial such as B. B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, A.H. Strong, and others.

I would like to state, honestly, before studying this doctrine I was in complete agreement with the pre-millennial view. However, I wanted to remain neutral and open to what God could show me. With that in mind, I had to erase any view completely from my thinking and start afresh.

Plus remain open even against a position of comfort. We must be willing and open to being taught--even if it means giving up on a teaching or doctrine we hold so dear. Even in the face of clear unmistakable evidence from the pages of Holy Scripture. With that aside let's move on to this doctrine. The main Scripture is found in Revelation 20:4.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

First, we will look at the words and what they mean in both Hebrew and Greek, and how they are used.

Second, is there enough evidence for this doctrine found in this Scripture? There are many words in Hebrew for the word kingdom, kingdoms, king, or kings, and so on. In a moment we will look at them.

The actual word **millennium** is not found in the Scriptures. It comes from the Latin word *mille* and the Greek word *chilioi* meaning a thousand. Some Bible dictionaries do not even list it as a topic. We must be very thorough so as to try and not miss anything. It may seem a bit boring at times, but I assure you it's needed.

Hebrew- **kingdom** *melek* king or royal. *Malak* reign, king, rule, to set up, to be or become king, to make or cause one to be a king. *Mamlakah* kingdom, royal, dominion, reign, sovereignty or realm. *Mluwkah* kingship or kingly office. *Malkuwth* realm, empire or estate.

Hebrew- **Reign** (we list this word because it deals with kingdom) *radah* rule, prevaieth, reign, to rule, have dominion, dominate, tread down, to subjugate. *Mashal* rule, governor, ruled over, power, reign, have dominion, to cause to rule, to exercise dominion. *Suwr* reign, have power, to be or act as a prince, have power, prevail over, to rule over.

Hebrew- **Thousand** the usage of the words thousand years is found only nine times in the whole of scripture. *Eleph* thousand, twelve hundreds, 1000, a thousand, as a numeral. There is an Aramaic reading in Daniel 7:10, *ribbow*, ten thousand, myriad, ten thousand times ten thousand. The thousand in the Hebrew Old Testament is everywhere a literal number, and "numbers found in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament are always written out."

Hebrew- **Years** *shanehs*, in the plural only, year, a division of time, a measure of time, as an indication of age, a lifetime (of years of life). The year in the Hebrew is everywhere a literal year, meaning 12 months with 24 hour days.

We have compiled the list of Hebrew words and their meanings king, kingdom, reign, thousand, and years. We need to remember these words, for in interpreting Scripture passages that deal with the millennium it will be important to know the use of the given passages. Let us move on to Greek looking up the same words.

Greek- **Kingdom** *basileia* kingdom (of God), kingdom (of heaven), kingdom (general or evil), His kingdom, the kingdom, kingdom, royal power, kingship, dominion, or rule. This word is everywhere used. However, as we will see the context of passages will reflect its meaning.

Greek- **Reign** *basileuo* reign, king, to be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign. *Hegemonia* reign, chief command, rule, sovereignty, of the reign of a Roman emperor. *Archo* rule over, reign over, to be chief, to lead, to rule. *Sumbasileuo* reign with, to reign together.

Greek- **Thousand** *chilioi* thousand.

Greek- **Years** *etos* year

Thousand and years are literal when literal. Kingdom and reign are used differently at different times in the scriptures. We need to see how they are used. The word reign is generally used two different ways. One, To be in authority, rule, either good or bad (Genesis 37:8; Exodus 15:18). Two, Suppressive rule (Leviticus 26:17).

The word kingdom is used four different ways. One, a kingdom of one person reigning on earth over countries, cities, lands, and people (Genesis 10:10). Two, Of a group of people (Exodus 19:6). Three, the Kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God (heaven and all its hosts, Psalm 145:13). Four, of salvation and the reign of God in our hearts (Matthew 6:33). Having compiled all of the words, and their definitions, we can begin to look at the passages that deal with the thousand year reign of Christ on the earth.

Old Testament

The first place that is used to give proof of the millennium is found in Genesis 12:1,2. Abram's (Abraham's) dad has died shortly after God calls Abram out, and makes him a promise--the "Abrahamic covenant." God says to him get out to ...a land that I will shew thee. Is this Canaan? Or something else? Canaan at this time is what is spoken of here (see Genesis 15:7; Acts 7:3-6; Hebrews 11:8-10). God also says He will make Abram a great nation meaning people. God then closes with ...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. Is this talking about a thousand year reign of Abram's seed? No. It means that through Abram will Messiah Jesus come and peoples, not all people, but some from all the families of the earth will have salvation through Jesus Christ.

In Genesis 15:18-21 God is renewing His covenant with Abram by saying He will give Abram a son--Isaac. In verses 18-21 God states exactly what He's talking about unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. God names all the tribes He will drive out thus specifying which land. If we really look at these two passages we do see a specific land marked out for Abram's seed. Which is ultimately that of Jesus Christ (Romans 4:16).

There are believers at this moment all over the world not dwelling in Israel. A small portion Abraham's physical descendants might dwell there, and in other parts of the world, but Spiritual Israel, the forever seed of Abraham, is not all dwelling in the physical land of Israel. God says in Genesis 17:8 He will give Canaan, present-day Israel and more, to Abraham's seed for ...an everlasting possession. Does this mean a thousand year reign of Christ on the

earth? Not really. However, it does point to a people, Abraham's seed by faith in Jesus Christ, possessing salvation and the glory of heaven.

In 2 Samuel 7 David desires to build a "house"--a physical house v.2, for God. God speaks to Nathan to go tell David God will build Himself a house. This is called the "Davidic Covenant." Notice in verse ten, moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.

Please notice the future tense God will appoint a place for His people. This can have two meanings--one fulfilled in 1 Kings 5:2-4. Or two, the ultimate fulfillment of our Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 12 God says He will set up David's physical descendant, his seed not seeds, and goes on to say He will establish His kingdom. Could this be speaking about Solomon? As a multiple-fulfillment prophecy it could; however, it's likely talking about Christ.

Why? because God says, in verse 13, he shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. Notice the words for ever we must understand no man, no human being, can reign on earth forever! No man can have rule over a kingdom for 100, 200, even 300 years, and certainly not a thousand years! This verse must mean Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32,33).

Only Jesus Christ, as the God-Man possessing all of Divinity, can rule and reign Forever! Does this teach a thousand-year reign on the earth by Christ? We know Jesus has built a house--not a physical one (Hebrews 3:6). We know Jesus is not here at present ruling on the earth (Acts 2:30; Hebrews 1:8, 8:1; Revelation 3:21). Luke 1:32,33 says the kingdom, being established forever, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. If Jesus is to reign on the earth for a thousand years we need to find out when let's move on.

Psalms 2 is a prophetic psalm of the kingdom of Christ. Within chapter two there seem to be two verses that indicate a kingdom. Verse six speaks about Zion this word in Hebrew is used 153 times and means "parched place." The Greek word is Sion, used nine times, means the same thing. Zion or Sion are

used of Jerusalem-- the city of David (Psalm 48:1,2; Matthew 5:35). We (believers) will occupy the "New Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:2). We know Jesus is not sitting as King now in Jerusalem, nor is Jerusalem holy at the present. Notice, this is in the past tense, yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion, this can mean the rule of Jesus Christ over the spiritual Jerusalem (believers) or certainly as King over the new Jerusalem.

Verse eight, of Psalm 2, opens with ask of me...who is this speaking about? This is important in order to understand this passage. We get the answer in verse seven, cross this to Hebrews 1:5, and we are certain it is the Father speaking of Christ. He says He will give [thee] the heathen [for] thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth [for] thy possession. The phrase rod of iron is used of Christ at his second coming. In the closing verses, we're instructed to fear Him and trust in Him because judgment is coming on those that do not know him.

In Psalm 22 there is an outline of the crucifixion, and the hope of salvation brought on by the crucifixion. Verses 27 and 28 are what is singled out as possible kingdom passages. In verse 27 it says, all the kindreds of the nations shall worship Him. This can be future, but does it give evidence of a thousand-year reign? All will worship Jesus some willing some not willing (Philippians 2:10.11). In verse 28 we're told He is the governor among the nations. Governor means ruler and being God Almighty He is that Ruler of the world. This word Governor is in the Hebrew "participle" --an action or condition in its unbroken continuance. In other words, this position for Him as ruler never has an end. Again, does this add evidence to a thousand year reign even in light of Psalm 24:1 that, present tense, the earth is the Lord's?

Psalm 24 verses 7-10 are given as kingdom passages. However, in honestly looking at them what do they teach? It's describing the King of Glory Jesus Christ for who? Those described in verses 3-5 those that have salvation through Him.

Psalm 72:6-11 these verses describe Jesus as reigning, and having dominion, this can be at his second coming. Verse 11 could be evidence of an earthly

reign. There are many, many, verses that state clearly that the earth is now, at present, the Lord's.

Isaiah 2:2-4 in these passages we are confronted with some language that seems to indicate the Lord, or His temple being on earth. Notice, that two words are repeatedly used here. One, Mountain *har* mountain, mount, or hill. Two, House *bayith* house, dwelling, habitation, home, household, family, family of descendants, temple, family, or families (cf. Micah 4:1-3; Joel 3:10).

Mountain(s) in the scriptures are used five ways. One, of literal mountains (Exodus 3:1,12; Numbers 14:40; Job 14:18). Two, figurative of strength and Deity (Zachariah 4:7; Isaiah 14:13; Psalm 48:1; Jeremiah 17:3, 51:25). Three, of Heaven (Ezekiel 28:14,16). Four, of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:20,26; Joel 2:1, 3:17; Zechariah 8:3). Five, of governments (Daniel 2:35; Amos 4:1).

House In the scriptures is used four ways. One, of a family, people, or tribe (Genesis 7:1,12:1; Exodus 2:1; Leviticus 10:6). Two, human bodies (1 Peter 2:5; Hebrews 3:6; 2 Corinthians 5:2). Three, a literal house (Genesis 19:11; 27:15). Four, the temple of God (Exodus 23:19; 34:26; 1 Peter 4:17).

With that in mind, let's look closer at Isaiah and try to interpret this passage correctly. The phrase last days means from Christ's first to His second advents (Hebrews 1:2). In verse two we read, and it shall come to pass in the last days, [that] the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. There are only two interpretations of the word mountain—strength, deity, or government, but most likely its strength or deity.

The word House can be used two ways. One, temple. Two, literal house (it can't be a literal house because it's the Lord's, and He does not dwell in a house made with hands, 2 Samuel 7:7; 1 Kings 8:27) so it must need be a temple in which something that and all nations shall flow unto it. Two possible ways of interpreting this, one, a temple of some kind. Two, salvation which allows both people (nations) to flow unto it.

In verse three we read, for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. Both words mean the city of David. This could mean a spiritual Jerusalem as indicated in Revelation 14:1; However, this phrase and all of verse four indicate something that has not yet happened, for nations still fight and there are still wars. The word of the Lord started from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47) clearly Jerusalem that is spoken of is in heaven (Revelation 14:1).

Isaiah 11:1-5 was fulfilled in Christ at His first coming (Matthew 3:16; John 1:32). Verse 6-9 indicate a peaceful kingdom, this has not yet happened ever. Even if this were spiritual verse nine says the earth. Verses 10-12 speak of His second coming, but the sequence seems off? unless verses 6-9 are what is offered to those accepting salvation. This speaks clearly of the new Jerusalem (cf. Isaiah 65:17-25).

Isaiah 9:6,7 we know verse six has been fulfilled. Government can mean rule, power, or authority (cf. Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:25) yet future. Verse seven is yet future.

Jeremiah 23:5-8 this is salvation.

Ezekiel 37:24-28 notice in this chapter, in verses 21-23, it's clearly talking about salvation. So is verses 24-28. Verses 26-28 are fulfilled in us (2 Corinthians 6:16) and will be in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3,22).

Daniel 2:44 is talking about salvation. Remembering Jesus' Kingdom stands forever.

Daniel 7:13,14 in these verses we are given a picture of something going on in heaven. However, this is amplified for us, clearly, in Revelation chapter five. Verse 14 is a clear indication of salvation. In this same chapter notice verse 18, but does this speak of a reign of Jesus on the earth for a thousand years? It's an expectation of Matthew 25:34. The same is true for verses 22 and 27. One thing to note, the scriptures always speak of an everlasting Kingdom of God or Christ. This is an indication of not only a thousand years but much more.

Zechariah 14 verses 1-7 indicate the second coming. Verse four (cf. Ezekiel 11:23; Acts 1:11,12; Revelation 14:1) taken together clearly teach the second coming! Verses 6 and 7 cross to Matthew 24. Verses 11-21 indicate some kind of Kingdom either spiritual or physical.

New Testament

It must be remembered that the New Testament is a fulfillment of the Old Testament. As we saw, the word used all of the time in the New Testament for Kingdom was *basileia* kingdom (of God), kingdom (of heaven), kingdom (general or evil), His kingdom, the kingdom, kingdom, royal power, kingship, dominion, or rule. This word is everywhere used. However, as we will see the context of passages will reflect its meaning.

This word is used a lot of Jesus when specifically referring to Salvation. Notice, right away in the opening chapters of the first Gospel. One, Jesus is a descendant of David the king (Matthew 1:6) Jesus is, at present and eternally, the King. Two, He was born the King (Matthew 2:2). Third, Herod was king of the Jews at that time and wanted no rival (Matthew 2:3,16). Fourth, Luke 1:32,33 says Jesus is given David's throne and it will last forever. We need to remember God is sovereign and is right now, and always will reign over all the kingdoms of the earth (2 Kings 19:15; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Isaiah 37:16).

The word Kingdom is found in the New Testament 150 times. Fifty-four of those are in Matthew alone, 43 are in Luke. Revelation has it only five times. Interesting the book of Revelation so occupied with the end times, and the millennium, and only mentions it a mere five times? However, the Gospels abound with the idea of the kingdom. Of the word Kingdom being used in the New Testament over 50% is allocated to the Gospels alone!

In Matthew the verses indicating Kingdom as salvation are as follows: 3:2; 4:17,23; 5:3,10,19,20; 6:10,13,33; 7:21; 8:11,12; 9:35; 10:7; 11:11,12; 12:28; 13:11,19,24,31,33,38,41,43-45,47,52; 16:19,28; 18:1,3,4,23; 19:12,14,23,24; 20:1,21,43; 22:2; 23:13; 24:14; 25:1,14,34; 26:29.

We need to always keep in mind, Jesus as God past, present, and future always reigns (1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Hebrews 1:8). Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark. 1:15 and Luke 9:2 all say that the kingdom is at hand or near. Clearly, it's speaking about salvation is it not? The Gospels are full of the fact that Jesus went and preached the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 4:23). Matthew 5:3 says the poor In spirit possess the kingdom now! Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (cf. Matthew 5:10.)

In Matthew 6:10 we read, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven. In context, this is a prayer Jesus tells us to pray. It's clear we're told to "pray to God" for these things. We are told to ask for His kingdom to come what kingdom? One that's on earth for a thousand years? or salvation in men's hearts? The evidence is in Matthew 3:2; 6:33; 7:21; 8:11; 12:28; 13:38. Jesus says, indirectly, that He is the kingdom of God (Matthew 12:28; Luke 9:62; 10:9,11; 11:20). The disciples believed the kingdom was with them already through Christ (Matthew 18:1). God wants to give us the kingdom now (Luke 12:32) this can only mean salvation.

Matthew 19:28 says.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Does this speak of a thousand year reign? It does speak of Jesus sitting on His throne, but so does Revelation 21:5; 3:21. Take Matthew 25:31-40 cross-reference it to Matthew 24:27-31 and what you have is a broader explanation of what happens at this time.

In Luke chapter nineteen Jesus is speaking to those with Him in Zacchaeus' house, and in verse ten He states why He came, for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. However, in verse eleven they seem to be thinking about a kingdom that should come not realizing He is the kingdom. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. Jesus corrects them by a parable in verses 12-27.

Jesus says His kingdom of not of this world (John 18:36). And again, the disciples were looking for that earthly kingdom (Acts 1:6). What is the kingdom of God? For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). And 1 Corinthians 4:20 for the kingdom of God [is] not in word, but in power. We have been translated into the kingdom upon confession of faith in Christ. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13). Note also 1 Thessalonians 2:12, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

When Jesus comes He will bring the kingdom. I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom (2 Timothy 4:1). We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:18).

The kingdom is, again, everlasting: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:11).

The apostle John believed he was in the kingdom in his days,

I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:9).

We read in 2 Peter 3:7-13 of the heavens and the earth are reserved by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. He goes on to give us the principle of the thousand years as a day and a day as a thousand years. Peter tells us that the heavens and the earth are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment (v.7). Then he tells us of the thousand years, and the one day right after verse seven. He goes on to say in, verse nine, of God's promise and longsuffering. Then in verse ten, he finishes what he was saying in verse seven by using but a conjunction.

He speaks of the DAY of the Lord when is this? Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31; Revelation 19. Here, in 2 Peter 3:10, he says when the Lord comes-- in the which, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. How shall we reign on the earth a thousand years if when He comes it's burnt up? Peter tells us the answer, verse thirteen, nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

In the book of Revelation, the one with so much controversy, so much misinterpretation, and so much symbolism we're reminded that the doctrine of the thousand year reign of Christ--on the earth really--only gets support from Revelation 20:4-6. This is not to say one passage cannot make a doctrine. However, doing so is not good exegesis. Moreover, it is difficult to build this doctrine on one passage, from one book, in a book of so much misunderstanding. Throughout this study, we have endeavored to remain open and teachable. The goal is to let the Scriptures tell us. Not we tell it pervades our thinking. I would be the first to admit if the Scriptures teach something we need to hold to it. If Scripture does not teach something we should not hold to it.

As we come to this last book of our study of the millennium be reminded of the following. The early church would not have known about a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth, for the gospels nor the epistles speak of it in the language of Revelation chapter 20. It was not known until John wrote and delivered the letter to the churches about A.D. 90-95 (some debate whether Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem—A.D. 65-68). So for the first 80-90 years of the existence of the church, she knew nothing of this doctrine. The whole basis is purported to rest upon one passage--Revelation 20:4-6.

In Revelation 2:26,27 we read.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

In analyzing this text we have a couple of questions. One, does this, in or out of context, speak of a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth? No. Two, what are the words used here? The word overcometh is *nikao* to conquer, prevail or get the victory. The word power is *exousia* authority or right. Lastly, the word nations is *ethnos* gentiles, nation, heathen or people.

The Greek speaks of this passage as prevailing or overcoming. Will we have power or authority over the earth itself? No. The word meant people, heathen, or gentiles. In verse 27 He goes on to say we will rule them with a rod of iron. Jesus says just as He received it of His Father. How is this? See Psalm 2:8; Revelation 19:15. How is it we will do the same as Jesus? See John 12:26, 17:24; Ephesians 2:6; Revelation 19:15. However, where does it say us? In Revelation 19:14 cross that with Daniel 7:22.

Revelation 5:10 let's look at it in context. Chapter four introduces the throne room of heaven, and we are introduced to the four living creatures and twenty-four elders. As we move into chapter five understand we're still in the throne room. Verses 5 and 6 show Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, as He is declared to be the only one worthy to open the scroll and lose the seals.

Revelation 5:9 says.

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Is this just the twenty-four elders and four living creatures? Revelation 14:3 says we sing the song as well (cf. Psalm 33:3; Isaiah 42:10).

Revelation 5:10 says, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. The children of Israel were to be this (Exodus 19:6) but we're also said to be this Revelation 1:5; 20:6; 1 Peter 2:5,9. Finally, it says, and we shall reign on the earth. There are only two ways to interpret this, one, literal earth, hence the thousand years. Or two, the new earth.

Revelation 11:15 in context takes place in heaven and great voices in heaven all of heaven's host is declaring the message that Christ reigns. Not limited to a thousand years, but for ever and ever. What is this passage speaking about? Matthew 25:32 of course. Remember, in the book of Revelation the word and appears 373 times that may be fine, but so what? Well, the thing is this it's the first word that appears in 19 of the 22 chapters! This confirms that it was a vision of a Day, given as one Day, on one day. (Revelation 1:10) What John saw was events of past, present, and future in one day! No time breaks in between the events.

It's a vision of action unfolding the events, not necessarily with sequence, but in some kind of order. John sees something and then he is shown something else having to do with what he saw may be of present or future events. For example, in Revelation 4 and 5 John sees events in heaven, then right in the middle, he sees everything loyal to God in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea give glory to God (5:13). Remember God works outside of time and is not limited to or constrained by time.

Revelation 20 here the words thousand years is used six times, of which, verses 4 and 6 only relate to the believer and Christ. Please note the word years is the Greek word *eth* it's not a plural word, but a singular word--not years but a year! This is very important given the fact of the principle in 2 Peter 3:8. Let me say again if a doctrine is clearly taught in scripture, even if it's only two verses it can be considered a doctrine as long as it bears truth.

We read in verse two that Satan is to be bound for a thousand years. Remember this is right after chapter 19, which all agree is clearly the second coming of Christ. Satan (the devil) is clearly distinguished here all agree on that. Verse two says, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. What does bound mean? It's the Greek word *deo* bind, tie, fasten, to bind, to forbid or prohibit.

There are three ways this word is used in the New Testament. One is literal binding ropes, chains, etc. (Matthew 14:3; 27:2). Two, to release, withhold, confine (Matthew 16:19; 18:18; Acts 23:14,21; Romans 7:2). Three, spiritual binding influenced by Satan (Luke 13:16). And bound him a thousand years. We

know the word thousand is *chilioi*-- thousand its plural of uncertain affinity. The word years is also of a certain fixed period of time, and again, it's in the singular six times in these verses; as a matter of fact, it's used as a singular word all through revelation.

Question. Is it safe to say that days, years, etc. are used literally in Revelation? Revelation 2:10 says, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days only ten days? Ten being the number of fullness of testing. Remember God is outside of time, and John was seeing a consistent vision. Why is Satan bound for only a thousand years? not more?

Again, keep in mind the principle of God--2 Peter 3:8 but, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Lastly, could it be this binding is for a day? The DAY? when all the things spoken of comes to full fruition? Yes.

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season (v.3).

In this section of chapter 20:3 we read and cast him into the bottomless pit what is this? The Greek word is *abussos* deep, bottomless, the abyss, the pit, the immeasurable depth. It's where we get "abyss" it is used the same way in Luke 8:31; Romans 10:7. Again, ...till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. It was common to "hold" or "detain" someone overnight or for a day in prison waiting for investigative judgment (Acts 5:18-22; 12:4-6; 16:23-26).

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (v.4).

The phrase and I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them is speaking about the believers taking judgment (Daniel 7:9,22,27; Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; 1 Corinthians 6:2,3).

... and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received [his] mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years (v. 4b).

This is clearly the rest of the believers during the time of the tribulation (Revelation 6:9; 13:13). The phrase and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years is one of the texts in question. Notice, the word lived it's the Greek *zao* be alive, alive, to live, breathe, be among the living, not dead, to enjoy real life, to have true life. This word is rendered in the English as "past tense"--an action or statement of something that has occurred in the past.

However, in the Greek it is rendered in the "Aorist tense"--the concept of the verb is considered without regard for past, present, or future time. In others words all the time they lived! This is also true and rendered in the same way with the word reigned that follows it. So if living and reigning with Christ is for only a thousand years it must end--seeing it has a beginning? How can this be when the scriptures testify to an everlasting kingdom?

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This [is] the first resurrection (v.5).

In the Greek the word **lived** in this verse is different from that of verse four,

και εζησαν και εβασιλευσαν μετα χριστου τα χιλια ετη. Οι δε λοιποι των νεκρων ουκ α
νεζησαν εως τελεσθη.

In verse five the Greek word is *anazao* be alive again, revive, or live again. Meaning those that had died without Christ before His second coming, and those described in chapter 19:21. Finished, *teleo*, fulfill, accomplish, expire, to bring to a close, to finish, to end, passed, finished, or to complete. It's in the "aorist tense"--at any time it was finished.

This [is] the first resurrection what exactly is this? It's important to always compare Scripture with Scripture. The word resurrection is never used in the Old Testament. Jesus spoke of it in Matthew 22:30,31; Mark 12:25; Luke 14:14; 20:35,36. Peter preached in Acts 4:2; 1 Peter 1:3. The Apostles did Acts 4:33. Paul did Acts 17:18,32; 24:15,21; Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15; Philippians 3:11. The writer of Hebrews did Hebrews 6:2; 11:35. It's still yet future 2 Timothy 2:18. Revelation 20:5 gives us a look at its fulfillment.

Jesus, our Lord, speaking of the resurrection--if He does not know when it takes place and in what order then we have a real problem, but He does--gives us the order. By that I mean, who is first and who is last. First, He says it's on the last day (John 6:39,40,44,54; 11:24) He then says who is first (Matthew 24:31; John 5:29). Paul agrees with Him (Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:23, 51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

So what is Revelation 20:5b? This [is] the first resurrection.

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:29)

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (Acts 24:15)

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:51)

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:31)

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ

shall rise first: Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

Only those blessed and holy can be partakers of the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:6)

The first resurrection is all the righteous in Christ. Those that went to be with Him before His second coming, and left their body behind, and those that are present on the earth when He does come. This is also called the resurrection of the just. It's very clear this takes place on the last Day.

Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (v.6)

The first part of the above verse is clear, but what is the last part, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years? We saw in Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9 that true believers are the kings and priests. We will reign with Him in the new earth; this is what it indicates. Is this speaking about a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth? No. It doesn't say that.

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. (v.7)

This is pretty self-explanatory. Still does this speak of a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth? No.

Now that we have examined all the relevant passages pertaining to the doctrine of the millennium, as I said, we will now look at what the early Church thought, and what some theologians have to say. First, the Church fathers as

contained in their writings. Remember not everything the "church fathers" taught was correct. We quote them here for comparison purposes.

Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians A.D. 110 -135

"Knowing, then, that "God is not mocked," (6) we ought to walk worthy of His commandment and glory. In like manner should the deacons be blameless before the face of His righteousness, as being the servants of God and Christ, (7) and not of men. They must not be slanderers, double-tongued, (8) or lovers of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, industrious, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant (9) of all. If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live (10) worthily of Him, 'we shall also reign together with Him,' (11) provided only we believe. In like manner, let the young men also be blameless in all things, being especially careful to preserve purity, and keeping themselves in, as with a bridle, from every kind of evil. For it is well that they should be cut off from (12) the lusts that are in the world, since 'every lust warreth against the spirit;' (13) and 'neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God,' (14) nor those who do things inconsistent and unbecoming. Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ. The virgins also must walk in a blameless and pure conscience."

Epistle of Barnabas A.D. 70 - 132

Further, (16) also, it is written concerning the Sabbath in the Decalogue which [the Lord] spoke, face to face, to Moses on Mount Sinai, 'And sanctify ye the Sabbath of the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart.' (17) And He says in another place, 'If my sons keep the Sabbath, then will I cause my mercy to rest upon them.' (18) The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation [thus]: "And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh

day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.' (19) Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, 'He finished in six days.' This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is (20) with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, (21) saying, 'Behold, to-day (22) will be as a thousand years.' (23) Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. 'And He rested on the seventh day.' This meaneth: when His Son, coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, (24) and judge the ungodly, and change the-sun, and the moon, (25) and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day. Moreover, He says, 'Thou shalt sanctify it with pure hands and a pure heart.' If, therefore, any one can now sanctify the day which God hath sanctified, except he is pure in heart in all things,

Fragments of Papias possibly A.D. 70-160

AMERICAN EDITION. Edited by Alexander Roberts, D.D. & James Donaldson, LL.D. Chronologically arranged, with brief notes and prefaces, by A Cleveland Coxe, D.D.

[Papias, who is now mentioned by us, affirms that he received the sayings of the apostles from those who accompanied them, and he moreover asserts that he heard in person Aristion and the presbyter John. (11) Accordingly he mentions them frequently by name, and in his writings gives their traditions. Our notice of these circumstances may not be without its use. It may also be worth while to add to the statements of Papias already given, other passages of his in which he relates some miraculous deeds, stating that he acquired the knowledge of them from tradition. The residence of the Apostle Philip with his daughters in Hierapolis has been mentioned above. We must now point out how Papias, who lived at the same time, relates that he had received a wonderful narrative from the daughters of Philip. For he relates that a dead man was raised to life in his day. (12) He also mentions another miracle relating to Justus, surnamed Barsabas, how he swallowed a deadly poison, and received no harm, on account of the grace of the Lord. The same person, moreover, has set

down other things as coming to him from unwritten tradition, amongst these some strange parables and instructions of the Saviour, and some other things of a more fabulous nature. (13) Amongst these he says that there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth. He moreover hands down, in his own writing, other narratives given by the previously mentioned Aristion of the Lord's sayings, and the traditions of the presbyter John. For information on these points, we can merely refer our readers to the books themselves; but now, to the extracts already made, we shall add, as being a matter of primary importance, a tradition regarding Mark who wrote the Gospel, which he [Papias] has given in the following words]: And the presbyter said this. Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities [of his hearers], but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements. [This is what is related by Papias regarding Mark; but with regard to Matthew he has made the following statements]: Matthew put together the oracles [of the Lord] in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could. [The same person uses proofs from the First Epistle of John, and from the Epistle of Peter in like manner. And he also gives another story of a woman (1) who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is to be found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.]

This is not Papias' writing but that of a translator as written in the "American edition" in 1885.

Between the part italicized and the next, there is information missing. Important information that clarifies what Papias really understood about the italicized part of the quote. The missing section is found in the book "The Apostolic Fathers."

"These ideas, I suppose, he got through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not realizing that the things recorded in figurative language were spoken by them mystically. For he certainly appears to be a man of very little intelligence, as one may say judging from his own words."

Justin Martyr A.D. 70 - 130

And Trypho to this replied, "I remarked to you sir, that you are very anxious to be safe in all respects, since you cling to the Scriptures. But tell me, do you really admit that this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt; and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came? or have you given way, and admitted this in order to have the appearance of worsting us in the controversies?"

Then I answered, "I am not so miserable a fellow, Trypho, as to say one thing and think another. I admitted to you formerly,(1) that I and many others are of this opinion, and[believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware;(2) but, on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise. Moreover, I pointed out to you that some who are called Christians, but are godless, impious heretics, teach doctrines that are in every way blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish. But that you may know that I do not say this before you alone, I shall draw up a statement, so far as I can, of all the arguments which have passed between us; in which I shall record myself as admitting the very same things which I admit to you.(3) For I choose to follow not men or men's doctrines, but God and the doctrines[delivered] by Him. For if you have fallen in with some who are

called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth],(4) and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians, even as one, if he would rightly consider it, would not admit that the Sadducees, or similar sects of Genistæ, Meristæ, (5) Gelilaeans, Hellenists, (6) Pharisees, Baptists, are Jews(do not hear me impatiently when I tell you what I think), but are[only] called Jews and children of Abraham, worshipping God with the lips, as God Himself declared, but the heart was far from Him. But I and others, who are fight-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years(7) in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged,[as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.

IRENÆUS A.D. 1st Century

He speaks about an earthly reign but makes no real reference to Christ reigning for a thousand years.

We have scoured many pieces of material, and many of the so-called trustworthy church fathers **do not** mention anything about a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth.

Many of the early writings, such as the Didache, and church fathers as Tatian, Ignatius, and others do not speak about it. The idea of a pre-millennial reign had its adherents in "Ebionism" and "Montanism" heretical groups existing in the late 1st Century early 2nd.

John Calvin declared "Shortly after the Chiliasts arose, who limited the reign of Christ to a thousand years." And speaks of it as "too childish either to need or to be worth refutation."

Martin Luther scornfully rejected it calling it "the dream."

Henry Thiessen tries to make many believe the pre-millennial view by quoting church fathers--only four. Of all the material we looked at concerning this doctrine including the four men, he quotes over 80% never mentioned it or

taught it. He says, "the early Church was largely pre-millennial." And then quotes only four Church fathers to support that. His Lectures in Systematic Theology, P. 365, can evidence only four Church fathers, quoted out of context, can this be considered "largely pre-millennial."? I do not believe so.

Paul Enns says in, "The Moody Handbook of Theology," p. 389. "The Church from the beginning was pre-millennial in belief." Then he quotes seven church fathers and the Didache to try to prove this. There are a couple of things wrong with this. One, the Didache, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Irenaeus (as seen above) do not support the pre-millennial view. That only leaves the four quoted by Thiessen. Two, how could Enns say, "The Church from the beginning was pre-millennial..." when John did not give the book of Revelation until A.D. 90? This is not "...from the beginning..." if the Church started at Pentecost.

Charles Ryrie says in "Basic Theology" p. 451, "In the earliest centuries of the Church a general pre-millennial scheme was widely held." He is a little more cautious on this point in not quoting the Church fathers. However, again the earliest centuries? That would include the first, no doubt, of which did not have the book of Revelation.

In a booklet titled "Is God finished with Israel: A debate on amillennialism" by Gary Hedrick of The Christian Jew Hour, he quotes Phillip Schaff, "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age (A.D. 100-325) is the prominent chiliasm or millenarianism ...a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius." Again, we have the same kind of quoting from each of these men.

Louis Berkhof, a respected church historian, in his book "The History of Christian Doctrines" p. 262, says, "But it is not correct to say, as some pre-millenarians do, that it was generally accepted in the first three centuries. The truth of the matter is that the adherents of this doctrine were rather limited in number." And on p. 263 he says, "During the Middle ages Millenarianism was generally regarded as heretical." And that "...around the time of the Reformation it was rejected by Protestant Churches."

We have gone over a tremendous amount of material in this study. Thus what is the conclusion? First, **there is no evidence of a post-millennial view.** Second, **the pre-millennial view has some grounds; although few in scripture.** And few of the writings of the early Church, but if taken literally could refer to a thousand year reign, after Christ comes. Third, **the a-millennial view has very strong support, both from scripture and the early fathers.**

If 2 Peter 3:8 *“but, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day [is] with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day”* is correct? And it is. Then we could say that within the Day, that is the one when Jesus comes back, and all things are concluded. That there is a thousand years of reigning of Christ and the believer. However, we can also say there is no literal thousand literal years on earth, but only one day in which Christ and the believer reign.

Order of events:

1. Gospel age
2. Promulgation of the gospel message.
3. Church age (remnant age).
4. Great tribulation.
5. Revealing of the antichrist, beast, false prophet.
6. Second coming, catching away of believers, the first resurrection, Satan bound, judgments, Satan cast into hell, eternal punishment, first heaven and earth destroyed.
7. New heaven new earth.
8. Eternal bliss.

What will the Kingdom will be like? Isaiah 10:20; 19:23,25; 24:6-12; 30:20,21; 35:1-10, chaps. 61; 62; 66; Amos 9:11-15; Zachariah 8:1-8, temple description: Ezekiel chap. 40-48, Revelation 21.

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