

Revelation

Chapter 20

Student

Contents: Satan bound for the Kingdom age. The first resurrection. Satan will be released at the end of the millenium, and **HIS** final doom. Judgment of the great White Throne.

Conclusion: When the Tribulation days have run their course, **CHRIST** will come with **HIS** saints, and after having cast down all opposing powers, will fling Satan into the bottomless pit for a **thousand years**, during which time **HE**, with the saints, will rule over the earth. At the end of the millenium Satan will be temporarily released, but he and his quickly gathered followers will be cast into the final hell forever. At that time also the unsaved dead of all the ages will be resurrected and after being judged according to their works will be given their portion in perdition.

Key Word: Judgment, 2, 11.

Strong Verses: 4, 12. Promise: 6.

Striking Facts: 4, 6. **CHRIST** is seen in this chapter as the **JUDGE** and then as the millennial **KING**. Those who are associated with **HIM** in this Kingdom are The Church and the Tribulation saints. Those who are now being called to **CHRIST** are therefore appointed, not to be subjects of the Kingdom, but co-rulers, priests of **GOD** and of **CHRIST**, and will have their specific work in connection with the work of **HIS** universal empire.

Questions:

1. Who is Gog and Magog?

Which of Noah's sons are they from?

2. How long will Satan and his lieutenants be imprisoned? **1,000 years [verse 3]**

3. What is the "First Resurrection"?

4. Where will Death and Hades go? **The lake of fire [verse 14]**

Discussion Question: What is your "End Time" belief? Why?

Christianity - Millennialism

Christian millennialist thinking is primarily based upon the [Book of Revelation](#), specifically [Revelation 20:1–6](#), which describes the vision of an angel who descended from heaven with a large chain and a key to a bottomless pit, and captured Satan, imprisoning him for a thousand years:

He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be let out for a little while.. [Revelation 20:2–3 NKJV](#)

The Book of Revelation then describes a series of judges who are seated on thrones, as well as John's vision of the souls of those who were beheaded for their testimony in favor of Jesus and their rejection of the mark of the beast. These souls:

Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. 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. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years. [Revelation 20:4–6 NKJV](#)

Early church

During the first centuries after Christ, various forms of chiliasm (millennialism) were to be found in the Church, both [East](#) and [West](#). It was a decidedly majority view at that time, as admitted by [Eusebius](#), himself an opponent of the doctrine:

The same writer (that is to say, [Papias of Hierapolis](#)) gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and some other more mythical things. To these belong his statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. I suppose he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures. For he appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses. But it was due to him that so many of the Church Fathers after him adopted a like opinion, urging in their own support the antiquity of the man; as for instance [Irenaeus](#) and any one else that may have proclaimed similar views.

— [Eusebius](#), *The History of the Church*, Book 3:39:11-13

Nevertheless, strong opposition later developed from some quarters, most notably from [Augustine of Hippo](#). The Church never took a formal position on the issue at any of the [ecumenical councils](#), and thus both pro and con positions remained consistent with [orthodoxy](#). The addition to the [Nicene Creed](#) was intended to refute the perceived [Sabellianism](#) of [Marcellus of Ancyra](#) and others, a doctrine which includes an end to Christ's reign and which is explicitly singled out for condemnation by the council [Canon #1]. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* notes that the 2nd century proponents of various [Gnostic](#) beliefs (themselves considered heresies) also rejected millenarianism.^[6]

Millennialism was taught by various earlier writers such as [Justin Martyr](#), [Irenaeus](#), [Tertullian](#), [Commodian](#), [Lactantius](#), [Methodius](#), and [Apollinaris of Laodicea](#) in a form now called [premillennialism](#). According to religious scholar Rev. Dr. [Francis Nigel Lee](#), "Justin's 'Occasional Chiliasm' sui generis which was strongly anti-pretribulationistic was followed possibly by [Pothinus](#) in A.D. 175 and more probably (around 185) by [Irenaeus](#)". [Justin Martyr](#),

discussing his own premillennial beliefs in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, Chapter 110, observed that they were not necessary to Christians:

I admitted to you formerly, that I and many others are of this opinion, and [believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware; 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.

[Melito of Sardis](#) is frequently listed as a [second century](#) proponent of premillennialism. The support usually given for the supposition is that "[Jerome](#) [Comm. on Ezek. 36] and [Gennadius](#) [De Dogm. Eccl., Ch. 52] both affirm that he was a decided millenarian."

In the early [third century](#), [Hippolytus of Rome](#) wrote:

And 6,000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day "on which God rested from all His works." For the [Sabbath](#) is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they "shall reign with Christ," when He comes from heaven, as John says in his [Apocalypse](#): for "a day with the Lord is as a thousand years." Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that 6, 000 years must be fulfilled. (Hippolytus. On the Hexaëmeron, Or Six Days' Work. From Fragments from Commentaries on Various Books of Scripture).

Around 220, there were some similar influences on [Tertullian](#), although only with very important and extremely optimistic (if not perhaps even [postmillennial](#)) modifications and implications. On the other hand, "Christian Chiliastic" ideas were indeed advocated in 240 by [Commodian](#); in 250 by the Egyptian [Bishop Nepos](#) in his Refutation of Allegorists; in 260 by the almost unknown [Coracion](#); and in 310 by [Lactantius](#). Into the late [fourth century](#), Bishop [Ambrose](#) of Milan had millennial leanings (Ambrose of Milan. Book II. On the Belief in the Resurrection, verse 108). [Lactantius](#) is the last great literary defender of chiliasm in the early Christian church. [Jerome](#) and interpretation of the Revelation of St. John, especially chapter 20. In a letter to [Queen Gerberga of France](#) around 950, [Adso of Montier-en-Der](#) established the idea of a "last World Emperor" who would conquer non-Christians before the arrival of the [Antichrist](#). [Augustine](#) vigorously opposed chiliasm by teaching the symbolic

Christian views on the future order of events diversified after the [Protestant reformation](#) (c.1517). In particular, new emphasis was placed on the passages in the [Book of Revelation](#) which seemed to say that as Christ would return to judge the living and the dead, [Satan](#) would be locked away for 1000 years, but then released on the world to instigate [a final battle against God and his Saints](#) ([Revelation 20:1–6](#)). Previous [Catholic](#) and [Orthodox](#) theologians had no clear or consensus view on what this actually meant (only the concept of the end of the world coming unexpectedly, "like a thief in a night", and the concept of "the [antichrist](#)" were almost universally held). Millennialist theories try to explain what this "1000 years of Satan bound in chains" would be like.

Various types of millennialism exist with regard to [Christian eschatology](#), especially within [Protestantism](#), such as [Premillennialism](#), [Postmillennialism](#), and [Amillennialism](#). The first two refer to different views of the relationship between the "millennial Kingdom" and Christ's second coming.

Premillennialism sees Christ's second advent as preceding the millennium, thereby separating the [second coming](#) from the [final judgment](#). In this view, "Christ's reign" will be physically on the earth.

Postmillennialism sees Christ's second coming as subsequent to the millennium and concurrent with the final judgment. In this view "Christ's reign" (during the millennium) will be spiritual in and through the [church](#).

Amillennialism basically denies a future literal 1000 year kingdom and sees the church age metaphorically described in Rev. 20:1–6 in which "Christ's reign" is current in and through the church.

The [Catholic Church](#) strongly condemns millennialism as the following shows:

The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized by ~~by a 1000 year reign of peace~~ eschatological judgment. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism, especially the "intrinsically perverse" political form of a secular messianism.

— *Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1995*

19th and 20th centuries

Bible Student movement

The [Bible Student movement](#) is a millennialist movement based on views expressed in "The Divine Plan of the Ages," in 1886, in Volume One of the [Studies in the Scriptures](#) series, by Pastor [Charles Taze Russell](#). (This series is still being published, since 1927, by the [Dawn Bible Students Association](#).) Bible Students believe that there will be a universal opportunity for every person, past and present, not previously recipients of a heavenly calling, to gain everlasting life on Earth during the Millennium.^[15]

Jehovah's Witnesses

[Jehovah's Witnesses](#) believe that Christ will rule from heaven for 1,000 years as king over the earth, assisted by [144,000](#) holy ones.

The Church of Almighty God

Also known as [Eastern Lightning, The Church of Almighty God](#) mentions in its teachings the Age of Millennial Kingdom, which will follow the catastrophes prophesied in the Book of Revelation.^[16]

Judaism

Millennialist thinking first emerged in [Jewish apocryphal literature](#) of the tumultuous [Second Temple period](#), producing writings such as the [Psalm 46](#), the [Book of Enoch](#), the [Book of Jubilees](#), [Esdras](#), [Book of Daniel](#), and the [additions to Daniel](#).

Passages within these texts, including 1 Enoch 6-36, 91-104, 2 Enoch 33:1, and Jubilees 23:27, refer to the establishment of a "millennial kingdom" by a [messianic figure](#), occasionally suggesting that this kingdom would endure for a thousand years. However, the actual number of years given for the duration of the kingdom varied. In 4 Ezra 7:28-9, for example, the kingdom lasts only 400 years.

This notion of the millennium no doubt helped some Jews to cope with the socio-political conflicts that they faced. This concept of the millennium served to reverse the previous period of evil and suffering,^l rewarding the virtuous for their courage while punishing evil-doers, with a clear separation of those who are good from those who are evil. The vision of a thousand-year period of bliss for the faithful, to be enjoyed here in the physical world as "[heaven on earth](#)", exerted an irresistible power over the imagination of Jews in the inter-testamental period as well as on early Christians. Millennialism, which had already existed in Jewish thought, received a new interpretation and fresh impetus with the development of Christianity.

[Gerschom Scholem](#) profiles medieval and early modern Jewish millennialist teachings in his book *Sabbatai Sevi, the mystical messiah*, which focuses on the 17th-century movement centered on the self-proclaimed messiahship (1648) of [Sabbatai Zevi](#) (1626–1676).

Baha'i Faith

See also: [Progressive revelation \(Baha'i\)](#)

Bahá'u'lláh mentioned in the [Kitáb-i-Íqán](#) that God will renew the "City of God" about every thousand years, and specifically mentioned that a new [Manifestation of God](#) would not appear within 1,000 years (1893–2893) of Bahá'u'lláh's message, but that the authority of Bahá'u'lláh's message could last up to 500,000 years.

Theosophy

The [Theosophist Alice Bailey](#) taught that Christ (in her books she refers to the powerful spiritual being best known by Theosophists as [Maitreya](#) as *The Christ* or *The World Teacher*, not as *Maitreya*) would return "sometime after AD 2025", and that this would be the [New Age](#) equivalent of the Christian concept of the [Second Coming of Christ](#).

Social movements

Millennial social movements, a specific form of [millenarianism](#), have as their basis some concept of a cycle of one-thousand years. Sometimes the two terms are used as synonyms, but purists regard this as not entirely accurate. Millennial social movements need not have a religious foundation, but they must have a vision of an [apocalypse](#) that can be [utopian](#) or [dystopian](#). Those associated with millennial social movements are "prone to be violent", with certain types of millennialism connected to violence. In progressive millennialism, the "transformation of the social order is gradual and humans play a role in fostering that transformation". However, catastrophic millennialism "deems the current social order as irrevocably corrupt, and total destruction of this order is necessary as the precursor to the building of a new, godly order". However the link between millennialism and violence may be problematic, as new religious movements may stray from the catastrophic view as time progresses.

Comparison of Christian millennial teachings

