

# BLESSED HOPE BIBLE PROPHECY STUDY

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## *“The Millennium”*

Revelation 20:1-8

Open your Bibles to Revelation Chapter 20. Our text is going to be verses 1 through 8. But what we are going to talk about (the Second Coming of Jesus Christ) is spoken of all through the Bible. Or, to be more specific, the Millennial Kingdom. Let's read our text, and I want you to listen carefully for a time stamp that John wrote about. Beginning in verse 1 he writes:

**<sup>1</sup>Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup>He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup>and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.**

**<sup>4</sup>And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.**

**<sup>7</sup>Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup>and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.**

So, how long is the time stamp that John writes about?

1,000 years.

We call it a millennium (from the Latin *mille* (1,000) *anum* year). And this particular Millennium speaks of the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ on the Earth. We are not going to get into the nature or character of that time. That will be a topic for a future study.

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What we want to look at now is the reality of that time; because a large number of people, including Christians, deny it will ever exist. And in these last of the last days, people who do believe in a literal 1,000-year reign of Jesus are mocked and even persecuted.

Our first slide is an article from the BBC news. The article is about an ambush where some police officers were shot to death in Australia by a group of people they call “*premillennialists*.” Let me read an excerpt from the article and you’ll see why I brought it up:

*Police have been investigating whether the group - brothers Nathaniel and Gareth, and Stacey, who had at different times been married to each man - were linked to conspiracy theories.*

*Queensland Police Deputy Commissioner Tracey Lindford on Thursday said their investigation had found the Trains "acted as an autonomous cell" and "executed a religiously-motivated terrorist attack".*

*They subscribed to a Christian fundamentalist belief system known as "pre-millennialism", and had targeted police.*

*"They did refer to police as monsters and demons - as evil."*

Let’s stop here for a second.

Who are the people who are actually saying things like this about the police?

The liberals — the “defund the police” people. They make a living projecting what they do on others. Look what this article claims:

*"Christian extremist ideology has been linked to other attacks around the world, but this is the first time we've seen it appear in Australia," Ms Lindford said.*

*The attack was premeditated, she said, and investigators had found "significant evidence" of advance preparation and planning.*

*The property - owned by Gareth and Stacey - had been set up with camouflaged hideouts, barriers, dirt mounds, guns, knives, CCTV and mirrors on trees.*

*While there's "no evidence" that any one else in Australia participated or assisted in the attack, Ms Linford said the Trains have been linked to individuals in the United States. Police have shared information with investigators there.*

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Did you catch the label the police placed on these people?

They are Christian fundamentalists in a subgroup called *premillennialists*.

Now I am not trying to make light of what these people did. It was horrible. And I pray they did not think they were doing it in the name of the Lord. But as a watchman on the wall, I need to wonder why the press ran with this particular label. After all, premillennialism has nothing to do with hating the police or the establishment. And it has everything to do with bringing as many people into the kingdom as possible before Jesus returns. I believe what they are doing is inspired by the enemy. Here is why (2 Peter 3:1-4):

**<sup>1</sup>Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of which* I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), <sup>2</sup>that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, <sup>3</sup>knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, <sup>4</sup>and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation.”**

Who does Peter say is going to come in the last days?

Scoffers.

And what are these people “*scoffing*” about?

The promise of the coming of the Lord. And these scoffers are not just the people of the world. They are also people in the church. They say that things have been the same since the “**fathers**” fell asleep.

And why do they say this?

Because they want to continue “walking in their lusts.”

They want things to remain the same, because they are taught that they are having their best life now. They don't want Jesus to come back and interrupt that. But it is not true that things just keep going on as they always have. In fact, things are going exactly as the Bible tells us they would.

We talked last time about the signs of the times are converging. And the enemy knows that his time is short.

So who better to get the world against those who know how short it is?

How short is it?

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Let's take a look at how the Bible sees time. Look at this chart called the *Timeline of the End Times*.

Those of us who interpret the Bible literally believe that Scripture says what it means and means what it says. We have a grammatical, historical, contextual hermeneutic (system of studying the Bible). In other words, we read it straightforward, and then make application. So it is easy for us to make a chart. Those who spiritualize the text have a huge problem doing this. In fact, they have a huge problem with prophecy in general.

The Reformed View, which constitutes much of protestant Christianity, is in this camp. So does the Catholic Church and much of mainline denominational Christianity.

They say that the things written in the Book of Revelation are not going to happen.

Or some, called Preterists, say they all happened by 70 AD when Titus Vespasian tore down the Temple in Jerusalem and sent the Jew packing.

But, I say, that it is so literal that John gave us an outline so we could follow the chronology of the book. Listen to what Jesus tells John to do in Revelation 1:19:

**Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.**

The things which John has seen are the vision he was given of Jesus in chapter 1 of the Revelation — a vision of Jesus in His glory.

The “**things which are**” comprise the seven letters to churches in Asia Minor during John's time. These letters not only give us an idea of what was going on in the early church. They also depict the state of the churches during the last days and give us an outline of church history.

Then in chapter 4 John is told to write the things that will happen, *meta tauta*. After what things. you might ask. After all the things that happen in the church age. John is at that time taken up to Heaven (Raptured!), and everything he sees from that point on is from a heavenly perspective.

Chapters 2-3 focus on the Church (the word *church* appears 19 times).

Chapters 4-5 give us a glimpse of Heaven.

But then, beginning in chapter 6 through chapter 19, the *church* is nowhere to be found.

Then in chapter 20 John speaks of the Millennial Kingdom, and in chapters 20-21 he tells us all about the eternal state.

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That first part, where it says the *church age*, that is where we are at now. Well, to be exact, I believe we are at this arrow. And the Rapture of the Church can happen at any moment. When it does, it sets the stage for a time called the Tribulation.

And as you can see, this seven-year period is cut in two.

The first half of the chart is depicted as the “**beginnings of sorrows.**” You may remember we talked about them last time when we looked at Matthew Chapter 24. I personally believe that these events take place just before the Tribulation (Matthew 24:33). We see wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, pestilence and the like in our time. And they are converging at a rapid pace, just as Jesus said they would. But then, in the first half of the Tribulation, we will see the first of three sets of seven judgments poured out by God on a Christ-rejecting world. These first seven seal judgments are the culmination of what Matthew wrote about in chapter 24. They speak of the same things but on a much greater scale.

Then, in the second half of the seven years, there are two more sets of judgments, depicted by trumpets and bowls. These judgments are progressively intense; but when they end, God is finished with His judgment on Earth. The chart calls this second 3½-year period the “**Great Tribulation.**”

But there is another reason for this time of trouble on the Earth.

During this seven-year time period, God is going to turn His attention back on His chosen people, Israel.

In fact, the beginning of the Tribulation is not at the Rapture of the Church. It is when, according to Daniel chapter 9, the Antichrist confirms a covenant between the Jews and the “many” (Muslims). This will allow the Jews to rebuild their Temple and begin animal sacrifices once again.

But in the middle of the seven years, Antichrist will desecrate the Temple and turn on the Jews (and Christians as well). That begins what is known as the “**time of Jacob’s trouble.**” But at the end of the seven years, Jesus will come back in power and glory.

The Jews will see the One they pierced, and all Israel will come to Him.

And then Jesus will set up His kingdom, for how long, according to Revelation 20?

1,000 years!

Satan will be bound, and Jesus will rule and reign from His rightful throne in Jerusalem. At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan is unbound. And, believe it or not, many people will

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follow him in rebellion. More on this later. But Jesus will send fire down from Heaven and devour the rebels, and Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Next there will be a judgment called the “**Great White Throne**” where unbelievers will be judged for their rejection of Jesus. At this time, they too will be cast into the Lake of Fire where they are separated from God for eternity.

Then God will burn the Earth with fire, cleansing it, and bringing it back to its original state (Revelation 21-22). The new city of Jerusalem will come down from Heaven. And we will dwell with Him there forever.

Simple.

Chronological.

True.

And guess what?

A lot of people don't see it this way. They don't study Revelation. They don't teach it. And some of them even ignore it by saying it doesn't mean what it says. They say we misinterpret what the Bible says. I say they have a problem with reading comprehension. You see, they do this even though Jesus says this in Revelation 1:3:

**Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.**

I don't know about you, but I need all the blessings I can get.

I trust that Jesus had John write down what is going to come to pass exactly how He wanted these truths conveyed.

Don't worry if you didn't get any of that. We will be taking it piece by piece as we move along in this prophecy study. What you need to understand is that the Bible says all of what I just expounded. But much of the church doesn't believe it. And they laugh at us because we do. They call us fundamentalists or escapists. And all because we have a different view of when and how Jesus will set up His Kingdom. All Christians believe that one day Jesus will come back and set up His Kingdom. But we don't all agree on the nuts and bolts. So let's take a look at the differing views Christians have about the coming Kingdom. There are three predominant views of the Millennium.

1) The first view is called Postmillennialism (*post*, meaning after).

These people interpret Revelation 20 somewhat figuratively. They hold that Satan is bound through the preaching of the Gospel and the advance of the Church throughout the world.

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They say that, at some point, the world will become predominantly Christian, recognizing Jesus as Lord. Of course, not everyone will come to Him. But enough will that the Church will become the dominant force in the world. So governments will make a conscious effort to order things according to the priorities of God's Word. Christ, although physically absent, will be ruling and reigning through His people. And this golden age will last for 1,000 years, or that number may figuratively mean a long period of time. So the basic understanding these people have is that it is the Church that paves the way for Jesus to return.

And this was the most accepted view until the 20<sup>th</sup> century when world wars, the Great Depression, and nuclear weapons crushed the idea that the Church would make things better.

It has in the past 30 years or so gotten new legs with a view called "**Kingdom Now**" or "**Dominion**" theology. Adherents to these views believe that Jesus cannot return until all His enemies have been subdued. They have a doctrine called the "Seven Mountain Mandate" that they follow. These are the *seven mountains* they speak of (from Got Questions):

- 1) *Education*
- 2) *Religion*
- 3) *Family*
- 4) *Business*
- 5) *Government/Military*
- 6) *Arts/Entertainment*
- 7) *Media*

*These seven sectors of society are thought to mold the way everyone thinks and behaves. So, to tackle societal change, these seven "mountains" must be transformed. The mountains are also referred to as "pillars," "shapers," "molders," and "spheres." Those who follow the seven mountain mandate speak of "occupying" the mountains, "invading" the culture, and "transforming" or "taking back" society.*

Now there is nothing wrong with being involved in any of these things as Christians. We are called to be salt and light in our world. But these people believe we have to take them back BEFORE Jesus can return. My Bible says Jesus' return is imminent. He is going to take His church out of the world in the Rapture. And then the seven years of Tribulation we just talked about will follow.

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One particular group of the proponents of Dominionism is called the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). Do your own research into this group, and my take is to stay as far away from them as you can.

- 2) The second view of the Millennium is called “**Amillennialism.**” The “**a**” before “**millennialism**” is a negation (meaning “*no*”).

So what they believe is that there is no literal 1,000-year Kingdom. It simply means a long time. They say that the Kingdom exists right now as Christ reigns as King in the hearts of His people, the Church.

Satan is bound now, so he cannot prevent the advance of the Gospel or the salvation of the elect. But he is able to wreak havoc in many other areas.

I say that if he is bound at all, his chain is too long!

As I said earlier, this is the view of most reformed churches, many denominational churches, and the Catholic church. And as such, it is the most common view with Christians today.

The biggest problem with this view (and Postmillennialism) is not only do they not see a literal kingdom. They also believe that the Church has replaced Israel in God’s plan (Replacement Theology). All of the promises He made to them will be fulfilled in the Church. But all of the curses He proclaimed for them are placed on Israel.

Historically, this had led to anti-Semitism and, unfortunately, some evangelical churches have adopted this heresy. Some call it Christian Palestinianism (among other things).

They see Israel as an apartheid state that has usurped the land from the Palestinians. I could go on for hours about this, but we will leave it for another time.

Unfortunately, this is the kind of deception people believe when they spiritualize Scripture. Think about it this way:

If 1,000 years doesn’t mean 1,000 years, then maybe God didn’t create the world in seven days.

Maybe Jesus wasn’t in the grave for three days and nights.

Maybe 12 tribes means something else like the JW’s say.

And maybe you don’t have to be born again to, like Jesus says in John 3, see the Kingdom of Heaven.



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Do you see the problem with this view?

But here is how they get out of it.

They are willing to take all of Scripture literally UNTIL they get to prophecy. I'll explain why in a moment. I choose to do what Dr. Ed Hindson said (quoting Dr. David Cooper):

*When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense.*

- 3) **A** and **Postmillennialism** both believe nonsense. That is why I am a **Premillennialist**.

The Premillennial position teaches that Jesus will return to inaugurate a literal 1,000-year Kingdom on Earth. He will set up His throne in Jerusalem and rule and reign from there on the throne that God promised David's ancestors would rule from forever.

If you read the Bible as it is written, I believe you are going to come up with a Premil viewpoint. See, you are becoming theologians here! And, by the way, this is important to note:

Premillennialism was the dominant viewpoint of the first three centuries of the Christian Church. The early church fathers called it "**Chiliasm**."

But in the third and fourth centuries the interpretive school called the "Alexandrian School" began in North Africa. This is where church fathers such as Origen and Augustine began spiritualizing the Scripture. And it just so happens that this was around the same time that the persecution of the Church by the Romans ceased. In fact, by the end of the fourth century, Christianity was the official religion of the Empire.

Can you see why they began allegorizing what prophecy says?

They couldn't have an eschatology that said that Jesus was going to come back and claim His throne. There was already an emperor sitting on a throne, and that made the truth uncomfortable. Then, when the emperor became entangled with the Popes — you get my drift.

But there were always groups of believers that held to a literal view of Scripture. They are called historic Premillennialists.

However, in the late 1700's and early 1800's a new group arrived on the scene. They are called Dispensationalists.

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I am not going to get into the differences between the historical and dispensational views at this time. Leave it to say that both schools believe in a literal return of Jesus to set up His Kingdom. Maybe we'll talk about this more when we take a look at the differing views about the Rapture of the Church. But know this.

There have always been groups of Christians that believed Jesus would come and set up a literal Kingdom here on Earth.

The last question we need to ask at this time is:

Why is there even a need for a Millennium?

Why doesn't Jesus just come back and we all go to Heaven to be with Him?

The answer is because the Millennium is *necessary*. I'll give you three reasons why this is true.

- 1) First, Jesus is going to come back to redeem the creation from judgment. Ever since Genesis Chapter 3, there has been a curse on this creation. The Scripture is clear when it says that “**creation groans**” for its redemption (Romans 8:22). So, even though there will be a recreation and reconditioning of the Earth during the Millennium, it is still tainted with sin. People will choose to rebel at the end. So, in order to redeem the creation from judgment, Jesus comes back, cleanses it and sets up His Kingdom. Thus, the Millennium will be an answer to the prayer:

**Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

- 2) Number two, the Millennium is needed for God to fulfill ALL the promises He made to Israel. The Scripture is filled with psalms and utterances made by the prophets. David was promised an everlasting earthly Kingdom in 2 Samuel 7. It was confirmed with an oath in Psalm 89. And the promises to Israel were both an eternal as well as an earthly Kingdom. There is more Scripture devoted to the Kingdom than almost any subject in the Bible. In fact, that is one of the digs the skeptics hurl at Premil adherents. They say we have a one-passage theology (speaking of Revelation 20).

True, that is the only passage that tells us the duration of the Kingdom. But large portions of the Old Testament are devoted to it. Isaiah 2:2-4 and many other passages tell us that the Kingdom will have a long duration. Isaiah 2:3 tells us the capital will be in Jerusalem.

War will cease (verse 4). The Millennium will be characterized by righteousness and tranquility. There will be peace available to all (Isaiah 11:3-5). And this is

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just the tip of the prophetic iceberg about the coming Kingdom. Many, many more Scriptures speak of this time.

And to not believe in them means you toss out a great deal of the Bible. But not only that. If God doesn't fulfill all His promises to Israel, that makes Him a liar. The Lord will, in fact, keep all of the promises He made to His chosen people. Just as He will keep all the promises He made to you.

- 3) Third, the Millennium will reveal, once and for all, man's true rebellious nature.

Think about this for a moment:

The Millennium will be an almost perfect environment. The creation will be returned to its Edenic state. Jesus will be seated on the throne and will be ruling with a rod of iron. So the Kingdom will be sinless for the most part. The Jews will be back in the land. Every inch of their land that was promised to them. They will also have the wonderful Temple we learned about in Ezekiel fully operational. Believers will be ruling with Jesus as they display their glorified bodies.

Yet, when Satan is loosed again after the how many years?

1,000.

Some, even many, will still rebel.

How often have you heard someone say this?

*The real problem is that people have a bad environment. If you put them in a good environment, they will do great.*

God is going to give them as close to Heaven the Earth can get, just like He did in the Garden of Eden.

But at the end, people will rebel. This will prove what the prophet wrote in Jeremiah 17:9 is true:

**The heart is deceitful above all things,  
And desperately wicked;  
Who can know it?**

You can take sin out of the environment, but you cannot take the sin nature out of man. He or she must be born again of the Spirit. Only Jesus can fix your life. And He has a plan. He has a timeline that will be kept to the "T."

For many years this plan was "sealed up" until the end, according to Daniel 12:4. Well, the end is now. I believe we can and should know the signs of the times (1

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Thessalonians 5). And people making fun of me or scoffing at what I think are not hurting me. They are fulfilling a prophecy that Peter made 2,000 years ago.

Things in our world are not falling apart. They are falling into place. And we can know this because we have God's Master Plan at our disposal. All we have to do is to rightly divide that truth (2 Timothy 2:15), and He will help us to discern the times we are living in.