

## Daniel and Revelation: The Thousand Year Reign

Search the internet with something akin to: “The Book of Daniel and Revelation” and the search results will number into the millions. There are articles, entire websites, and videos dedicated to unraveling the connection between these two books of the Bible. It is to dive headlong into a world in which people are trying to unravel the symbols, visions, numbers, hints, and words - generally with several objectives in mind: (a) when is Jesus returning? (b) When is the thousand-year reign? (c) Who is the antiChrist? And (d) what is the “mark of the beast?”

The articles, opinions, etc. range from enthusiastic students of the Bible to scholarly inquiry - and quite a few cultists (and I mean that term benignly). It has been my experience that apart from scholarly works, each contributor is viewing through the lens of their understanding of the “thousand year reign.”

*“Then I saw an angel come down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the abyss and a heavy chain. He seized the dragon, the ancient serpent, which is the Devil or Satan, and tied it up for a thousand years and threw it into the abyss, which he locked over it and sealed, so that it could no longer lead the nations astray until the thousand years are completed. After this, it is to be released for a short time. Then I saw thrones; those who sat on them were entrusted with judgment. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image nor had accepted its mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over these; they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for [the] thousand years. When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison” (Rev 20:1-7)*

There are three basic viewpoint - each time referenced to the second coming of Jesus

### **Premillennialism** (Jesus comes before the 1000 year reign)

The premillennialists can be divided up into two groups: the classic pre-mills and the dispensationalist pre-mills. On the one hand, *Classic Premillennialism*, stemming from the time of the Church Fathers, believes that when Jesus returns He will establish His kingdom upon the earth for 1,000 years (which may be symbolic or literal). However, it does not hold to the idea that there will be a secret Rapture before the time of the Great Tribulation. This historical perspective understands the new people of God to be the church and therefore, the promises God made to national Israel will be fulfilled in the history of the church both before and after the Second Coming. Some classic pre-mills also point out that there will be a revival amongst the Jews just before the Lord’s return.

*Dispensationalist Premillennialism*, on the other hand, is different from the historical version of Premillennialism because it believes that Christ will rapture His church before the Great Tribulation. Dispensationalism, which was born in the nineteenth century but can be traced back to the time of the Fathers, puts a lot more stress on national Israel than Classic Premillennialism. Once the church is raptured, God will begin to work with the nation of Israel as in the days of the Old Covenant. The Jews will preach the Gospel and many Israelites and Gentiles will come to faith in Christ before His return. God will literally fulfill all of the promises He made to Israel in the Old Testament in the Millennium and the nation will reign throughout the whole earth.

### **Post-Millennialism** (Jesus comes after the 1,000 year reign)

Post-Millennialism, in stark contrast to Pre-Millennialism, believes that the Millennium occurs before Jesus' Second Coming rather than after. Since Scripture speaks of the Millennium as a time of great prosperity for the kingdom of God, post-mills are inherently optimistic. The world, as they see it, is in an ongoing golden process of progress. Although this view is scarcely mentioned by the Fathers, it was championed by many of the English Puritans who believed that a huge awakening was soon to occur amongst Jews and Gentiles before the Lord's return.

The 1,000 years do not have to be literal in post-mill thought. They merely symbolize a long time of advancement for the cause of the Gospel. Post-Millennialism reached its zenith amidst the cultural buoyancy of the nineteenth-century; but it was promptly struck down following the horrific tragedies that characterized the two World Wars in the first-half of the twentieth-century.

### **3.- Amillennialism**

Last but not least, we come to Amillennialism which, etymologically, means 'no Millennium'. So what about Revelation 20:1-7? Well, it would be unfair to say that a-mills do not believe in a Millennium; they simply believe that it is a symbolic, heavenly reality and not an earthly one. Christ is ruling right now over His church from heaven alongside his saints. And Satan is currently bound in the sense that he cannot prevent people from hearing the Gospel and believing in Christ.

Like Pre-Millennialism, Amillennialism enjoyed good standing amongst the Church Fathers. But unlike the pre-mill stance, a-mills are persuaded that Christ will not establish a 1,000 year reign on the earth after His Second Coming. Once He comes back, there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And what do a-mills think about the Rapture? Quite simply, they do not believe that there will be one.