



GULF SHORES

CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY NIGHT SERIES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF JESUS

The Millennium, meaning “thousand,” refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ (*Revelation 20:1–6*). The Bible’s only specific mention of the Millennium is in Revelation and interpreters differ greatly in their understanding of the Millennium, how it will occur, when it will begin, and how it will end.

The Postmillennial View = Postmillennialists expect Christ’s visible return after the Millennium. They look for God to use the church’s teaching and preaching to usher in a lengthy period (some interpret the thousand years literally, others symbolically) of peace and righteousness before Christ’s return. Postmillennialists usually adopt either the “Historical” or “Preterist” view on other passages within Revelation.

The Premillennial View = Premillennialists believe that Christ will return before the Millennium. Interpreting **Revelation 20** literally, they hold that Christ will reign on earth for a literal thousand years. Within this basic area of agreement, there are, nevertheless, a number of variant views—the most prevalent of which are the pretribulational, midtribulational, and the posttribulational views (explained below).

The Premillennial/Pretribulational View (Modern) = Premillennial-pretribulational scholars argue that there are two different peoples of God—Israel and the church—with two different prophetic programs. According to this view, the church will be “raptured” prior to a seven-year Great Tribulation. Following the tribulation, Christ will return to establish a thousand-year millennial kingdom centered in Jerusalem and involving the reinstatement of the Old Testament sacrificial system. The millennial kingdom will end with a futile rebellion by the forces of evil, after which will come the final judgment and beginning of the eternal reign.

The Premillennial/Midtribulational View (Uncommon) = Premillennial-midtribulational scholars basically hold to the same view expressed above, except they believe the rapture will occur in the middle of the tribulation period. This leaves the literal 1,000 years up for debate.

The Premillennial/Posttribulational View (Historic) = Premillennial/posttribulational scholars assert that Christ will return at the end of a seven-year Great Tribulation to establish a millennial kingdom. This kingdom will end with a rebellion by the forces of evil and the final judgment. This view often interprets prophecy in a non-literal way and does not usually view Israel and the church as the objects of completely different divine historical plans. Rather, Israel and the church ultimately form one people of God. Premillennialists of both types adopt the “Futurist” approach to the book of Revelation.

The Amillennial View = Amillennialists interpret Christ’s millennial reign in an ideal or spiritual sense. While believing in the Second Coming, they reject the idea of a literal thousand-year reign on earth. Some see Christ’s reign as having begun during His earthly ministry or at the time of His resurrection. They cite Peter’s declaration that Christ now rules from the right hand of God (**Acts 2:33–36**). Israel and the church are viewed as forming one people of God, and the kingdom promises to Israel are seen as applying to the church age, or to the eternal existence in the new heavens and the new earth. The Amillennial approach usually involves an “Idealist” view of Revelation as a whole.