

The Question before Us: When Shall Christ Come?

Christ's Return in Relation to the "Millennium" (Revelation 20:1-10)

A. Two Broad Positions on the Timing of Christ's Return

1. Christ will return BEFORE the "millennium."
2. Christ will return AFTER the "millennium."

B. Two Specific Schools of Thought within Each of These Positions

Before the "millennium"

1. Historic (classic) pre-millennialism
2. Dispensational pre-millennialism

After the "millennium"

1. Post-millennialism
2. A-millennialism

A Return Back to Our Initial Propositions Derived from NT data other than Rev. 20:1-10:

1. The Bible speaks of a singular return of Jesus Christ.
2. The Bible speaks of this singular return of Jesus Christ including the resurrection of both the just and the unjust.
3. The Bible speaks of this singular return of Jesus Christ ushering in the Day of Judgment in which all shall be judged.
4. The Bible speaks of this singular return of Christ ushering in the new heavens and the new earth.
5. The Bible Speaks of this singular return of Christ ushering in the eternal state.
6. Christ's return is the culminating event of history in which He and His cause shall be vindicated once and for all, and all opposition to His Kingdom shall be overthrown once and for all.

These propositions lead us to seriously question any position that would posit an additional stage of "history" after Christ's glorious return, especially a stage of history in which:

1. Sin still exists.
2. Death still exists.
3. The curse of Genesis 3 on the creation is still operative.
4. Rebellion against Christ is still present in the hearts of some.
5. The offer of salvation is still extended to sinners.
6. Satan is still in a position to lead a world-wide rebellion against Christ at the close of this stage of history.

According to the pre-millennialist these 6 things characterize the millennium while at the same time:

1. The glorified Christ reigns on the earth that is still subject to the curse of Genesis 3.
2. The saints who lived and died prior to the millennium have been resurrected, received their glorified bodies, and reign with Christ on earth.
3. Non-glorified sinful mortals live, propagate, and personally receive or reject the present and glorified Christ.

On to Revelation: Some prefatory comments (primarily from D. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*)...

1. Revelation is given to "reveal."
2. Revelation is a book "to be seen" – a book of symbols in motion.
3. Revelation only makes sense in light of the Old Testament.
4. Numbers count in the book of Revelation as they are used symbolically.
5. Revelation is for a church under attack.
6. The basic message of Revelation is quite simple: "We WIN!"

Connecting the Dots in Revelation

I:1-8

Opening Introduction

I. 1:9-3:22

CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN LAMPSTANDS

Christ and His church throughout the New Testament Era

II. 4:1-8:1

CHRIST AND THE BREAKING OF THE SEVEN SEALS

Christ's rule over the unfolding history of the New Testament Era

The 6th & 7th Seals bring us to:

- (1) the Return of Christ (6:12-17)*
- (2) the End of the NT Era & the End of History (6:12-17)*
- (3) the Threshold of the Day of Judgment (6:17, 8:1)*

III. 8:2-11:19

CHRIST AND THE BLOWING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

Christ's trumpets of warning throughout the New Testament Era

The 7th (Last) Trumpet brings us to:

- (1) the (implied) Return of Christ (11:15)*
- (2) the End of the NT Era & the End of History (11:15-18)*
- (3) the Threshold of the Day of Judgment (11:18)*

(Compare to 1 Corinthians 15:51-57 & 1 Thess. 4:15-17)

IV. 12:1-20:10

CHRIST, THE WOMAN, AND THE PERSECUTING DRAGON

Christ's church persecuted, yet protected & prevailing until the end

Chapter 12 – the **dragon** introduced (foiled by Christ, enraged, persecuting the church)

Chapter 13 – the **beast and false prophet** introduced (dragon's agents to persecute church)

Chapter 14:1-5 – the **faithful with the Lamb** introduced (persecuted, killed, & rejoicing)

Chapter 14:6-13 – the doom of **those with the mark (Babylon)** announced

Chapter 14:14-20 – **those with the mark (Babylon)** destroyed

Chapter 14:14-20 brings us to:

- (1) *the Return of Christ (14:14)*
- (2) *the End of the NT Era & the End of History (14:15, 18)*
- (3) *the Threshold of the Day of Judgment (14:15, 18)*

→→ Chapters 15-16 – THE SEVEN BOWLS OF WRATH ←←

The Seven Bowls Detail the Holistic Judgment upon All Who Oppose God

The 6th & 7th Bowls bring us to:

- (1) *the Preparation for the Last Battle - "Armageddon" (16:12-16)*
- (2) *the (implied) Return of Christ (16:17)*
- (3) *the End of the NT Era & the End of History (16:17)*
- (4) *the Threshold of the Day of Judgment (16:19b)*

Chapter 17 – the doom of the **harlot (Babylon)** announced

Chapter 18 – the **harlot (Babylon)** destroyed

The 6th & 7th Bowls "REPLAYED" Detailing the Destruction of those with the mark/Babylon/the harlot.

Chapters 17-18 bring us to:

- (1) *the Last Battle (17:14) - a "replay" of Armageddon and its outcome*
- (2) *the (implied) Return of Christ (17:14)*
- (3) *the End of the NT Era & the End of History (18:20)*
- (4) *the Threshold of the Day of Judgment (18:24-19:3)*

Chapter 19:1-10 – the **faithful bride with the Lamb** (rejoicing in contrast to the harlot)

Chapter 19:11-21 – the **beast and false prophet** destroyed

The 6th & 7th Bowls "REPLAYED" Detailing the Destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet

This section (19:11-21) brings us to:

- (1) *the Return of Christ*
- (2) *the Last Battle brought to a close - a "replay" of Armageddon*
- (3) *the End of the NT Era & the End of History*
- (4) *the Threshold of the Day of Judgment*

Chapter 20:1-10 – the **dragon** destroyed

The Climactic Judgment of the Bowls "REPLAYED" but now stretching back to Chapter 12.

Proposition: This Section Details the Demise of Satan

- (a) *from His being cast out of Heaven (chapter 12)*
- (b) *to His being cast into Hell (20:10)*

Further Exploration of Revelation 20:1-10

19:11-21 & 20:1-10 – Problems with a Simple Chronological Relationship

1. At the end of 19:11-21 there are no longer any nations to deceive. Hence the binding of Satan so that he would not deceive the nations makes no sense.
2. There appears to be only one great battle, not two or three.
 - 16:14 “sunagein autous eis ton polemon” – to gather them unto **the battle**
 - 17:14 “outoi meta tou arniou polemesousin” – these against the lamb do **battle**
 - 19:19 “sunegmena poiesai ton polemon meta” – gathered together to make **the battle** against [Him]
 - 20:8 “sunagein autous eis ton polemon” – to gather them unto **the battle**
3. Revelation 15:1 states, “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete (or finished, or perfected).” When the seventh bowl judgment is poured out Revelation 16:17 declares, “It is done (or completed, or finished, or perfected).”

If the seven bowl judgments complete God’s wrath, and the seventh bowl ends with the overthrow of the enemies of God at the battle of Armageddon, then how is it that 1,000 years after Armageddon there is another battle and another outpouring of God’s wrath?

Conclusion #1: Revelation 20:7-10 describes the same event as:

Revelation 19:17-21
Revelation 17:14
Revelation 16:14-21
Revelation 14:14-20
Revelation 11:15-19
Revelation 6:12-17

Note how “the end” is arrived at **SEVEN** times in Revelation.

Conclusion #2: *The close of this section (20:7-10) brings us:*

- (1) to the preparation for the Last Battle – a “replay” of the 6th Bowl (cf. 16:12-16; 17:14)
- (2) to the (implied) Return of Christ (“fire falls from God out of heaven”)
- (3) to the Last Battle brought to a close – a “replay” of the 7th Bowl (cf. 16:17-21; 19:17-21)
- (4) past the Threshold of the Last Day – Satan cast into Hell forever (20:10)

Conclusion #3: The return of Christ to destroy all His enemies (and especially Satan) is as 20:7 states, **AFTER** “the thousand years have expired.”

20:1-3 How then Are We to Understand the Binding of Satan?

1. Is Satan’s binding so complete that he is rendered immobile and inactive?
2. How does verse 3 carefully define the nature of Satan’s binding?

3. What was the condition of the nations of the world prior to Christ's coming?

Psalm 147:19-20

Acts 14:15-16

Acts 26:15-18

4. What happened with the coming of Christ?

Matthew 12:22-29

John 12:27-33

Matthew 28:18-20

Conclusion #4: The binding of Satan is a specific binding that prevents him from deceiving the nations in the same manner that he did in the Old Testament era. *He is still free to harass, to persecute, and to tempt, but not to hold sway over the nations in such a way as to prevent the gospel of Christ from penetrating.*

Conclusion #5: This binding took place when Christ finished His work on Calvary, rose from the dead, and ascended on high.

20:3 How then Are We to Understand the 1,000 years?

1. The language of verses 1-3 is symbolic from beginning to end – i.e. key, bottomless pit, great chain, dragon, serpent of old.

2. The number 1,000 is often used in the Bible to represent an UNSPECIFIED, NON-LITERAL yet LARGE quantity.

Deuteronomy 7:9

Psalm 50:10-11

Psalm 84:10

Psalm 90:4

2 Peter 3:8

3. Think how numbers are used elsewhere in the book of Revelation – i.e. 3-1/2, 7, 10, 12, 666, 12,000, 144,000.

Conclusion #6: The 1,000 years is to be understood symbolically. Ten is the number of fullness. $10 \times 10 \times 10 =$ The complete fullness of God's purpose.

Conclusion #7: Satan will be bound for a long time and be prevented from holding the nations under the sway of darkness and deception. This long time is equivalent to the time of the gospel going forth to the ends of the earth. Hence the 1,000 years is symbolic of the entire New Testament era which will be long and full.

Conclusion #8: At the end of the 1,000 years (the end of the NT era) Satan will be released for a "little season" to once again hold sway over the nations with his deception. This will be right before the end of time. This "little season" is intentionally put in contrast to the 1,000 years. In contrast to the long and full timeframe of the gospel age, the "little season" will be pathetically small and limited. This final assault will be brought to defeat as Christ returns in glory to cast Satan into hell forevermore.

Next week: Revelation 20:4-6 – The Reigning of the Saints and the First Resurrection in relationship to the 1,000 years.