

The Question before Us: When Shall Christ Come?

Christ's Return in Relation to the "Millennium" (Revelation 20:1-10) – Before or After?

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.

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

- *This will be the situation until "the end"*

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 "the end"*

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 "the end"*

IV. 12:1-20:10

CHRIST, THE WOMAN, AND THE PERSECUTING DRAGON (AND COHORTS)

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

A Chpt. 12 – the **dragon** introduced (foiled by Christ, enraged, persecuting the church);

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

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

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

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

- *14:14-20 brings us to "the end" (language that anticipates the "last battle")*

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

- *The 6th & 7th Bowls bring us to "the end", to the "last battle"*

D' Chpt. 17 – the doom of the **harlot (Babylon)** announced

Chpt. 18 – the **harlot (Babylon)** destroyed

- *6th & 7th Bowls "REPLAYED" - Destruction of Babylon (the "last battle")*

C' Chpt. 19:1-10 – the **bride with the Lamb** (rejoicing in contrast to the harlot)

B' Chpt. 19:11-21 – the **beast and false prophet** destroyed

- *6th & 7th Bowls "REPLAYED" - Destruction of Beast & False Prophet (the "last battle")*

A' Chpt. 20:1-10 – the **dragon** destroyed

- *The Bowls "REPLAYED" - first stretching back to Chapter 12, and then culminating in the "last battle"*

This Details the Destruction of Satan - the enemy behind all Christ's enemies

(a) from his being cast out of heaven and "bound" (12:7-12 cf. w/20:1-3)

(b) to his being destroyed at the "last battle" and cast into hell (20:7-10)

Further Exploration of Revelation 20:1-10 (review from last time)

I. 19:11-21 & 20:1-10 – Significant 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; 17:14; 19:19; 20:8)
3. Revelation 15:1 states that God's wrath is complete in the Seven Bowl judgments. 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:

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

Hence, "the end" is arrived at **SEVEN** distinct 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" – see **2 Thess. 1:6-10**)
- (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: When then is Christ's return in relationship to the 1,000 years? The return of Christ to destroy all His enemies (and especially Satan) is as 20:7 states, **AFTER "the thousand years have expired."**

NOTE: *Roman numerals II and III below were covered in full in the evening sermon on 3/7/10. If you missed this and would like to listen to it you may go to memorialopc.org/sermons or ask Roy Marriott for a CD copy.*

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

Note how there is a significant difference in Satan's relation to the "nations" prior to Christ's first coming and after Christ's first coming:

Prior to:	Psalm 147:19-20	Acts 14:15-16	Acts 26:15-18
After:	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 (i.e. 1 Peter 5:8 & Eph. 6:11-16), but not to hold sway over the nations in such a way as to prevent the gospel of Christ from penetrating and prevailing. He is filled with great wrath but impotent to prevent the spread of the gospel.*

Conclusion #5: When did this binding take place? This binding took place when Christ finished His work on Calvary, rose from the dead, and ascended on high (see Matt. 12:22-29 & John 12:27-33 above).

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

1. The language of vv. 1-3 is *symbolic* from beginning to end – i.e. key, bottomless pit, great chain, dragon, serpent of old – leading us to wonder if the 1,000 years might also be symbolic. After all you cannot bind a spirit (Satan) with a literal chain.
2. Numbers are used in a symbolic manner elsewhere in the book of Revelation – i.e. 3-1/2, 7, 10, 12, 24, 666, 12,000, 144,000 – leading us to wonder if the 1,000 years might also be symbolic.
3. The number 1,000 is often used in the Bible to represent an UNSPECIFIED, NON-LITERAL yet LARGE quantity. See:
Deuteronomy 7:9 Psalm 50:10-11 Psalm 84:10 Psalm 90:4 2 Peter 3:8

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

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 (Matthew 24:14). *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.

Further Exploration of Revelation 20:1-10 (continued)

20:4-6 “This is the First Resurrection”

20:4b “And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

20:5a “But the rest of the dead did not live until the 1,000 years were finished.”

20:5b “This is the first resurrection.”

20:6a “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the 1st resurrection. Over such the 2nd death has no power.”

1. Note the parallels between the “first resurrection” and the “second death.” Just as a “first” resurrection implies a “second,” so also a “second” death implies a “first.”
2. If we flesh out the “first” and “second” death we come up with the following:
 - a. The “first death” is provisional; the “second death” is final.
 - b. The “second death” is clearly defined for us as the eternal abode of the unbeliever in 20:14-15, “Then death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Hence the “second death” = hell.
 - c. The “first death” is not so clearly defined for us. We have two options: (1) **spiritual death** - being dead in sins and trespasses (i.e Eph. 2:1), *or* (2) **physical death**. Both of these are provisional and anticipate the “second death.” While spiritual death is the ground for the second death, it seems slightly more likely that physical death is in view here (note the focus on the martyrs, etc.).
3. Now we are ready to look at the “first” and “second” resurrection.
 - a. Just as the “first death” is provisional, so also the “first resurrection” should be seen as provisional or preparatory for the consummative and final (and implied) “second resurrection.”
 - b. What then is this provisional “first resurrection”? Two answers have usually been given by those who believe that Jesus’ return will be after the millennium. (1) **regeneration** – being raised from spiritual death to spiritual life in Christ, that is, being born again. As the believer is made alive together with Christ, he is raised up and made to sit in the heavenly places with in Christ (Eph. 2:5-6, Col. 3:1-4); *or* (2) **enjoyment of the intermediate state**, that is, though the Christian dies (and is even ruthlessly martyred) yet he lives and reigns with Christ in heaven as he eagerly awaits the resurrection of his body on the last day, at the “second resurrection.”
 - c. Convincing arguments can be made for either position. Position #1 has ample support from the rest of the New Testament, especially John 5:21-29. Position #2 has better contextual support from the book of Revelation (6:9-11; 13:7; 13:15; 14:1-5; 14:12-13; 20:4 – the location looks like heaven).
 - d. Whichever position one takes the “second resurrection” is the resurrection of the body on the last day when Christ returns to usher His people into glory.
4. Now we are ready to see the relationship between the “first resurrection” and the “second death.” Your relationship to one determines your relationship to the other. Again, two options present themselves depending upon how one views the 1st resurrection/1st death above:
 - a. **Option #1:** Though born in sins and trespasses, and spiritually dead to the things of God (the 1st death), by grace one is born again and made alive in Jesus Christ, hence experiencing the “first resurrection.” He then is no longer subject unto the “second death,” eternal hell, but anticipates the resurrection of his body (the 2nd resurrection) though he may physically die. This can perhaps be put in a memorable form: ***Once born, twice dead; Twice born, only once dead.***
 - b. **Option #2:** Though Satan rages and attacks the church, though many are martyred and lose their lives (the 1st death), nevertheless, though they be dead, behold, they live and reign with Christ in heaven experiencing the “1st resurrection” and the guarantee of enjoying the “2nd resurrection.” All others who bear the mark of the beast (those owned by Satan) do not experience “life” at their physical death (the 1st death), but provisional torment which will lead unto the “second death” at the “2nd resurrection” when Christ returns in glory. Perhaps Vern Poythress captures this view best: “The 1st resurrection, like the 1st death, is preliminary, while the 2nd resurrection, like the 2nd death, is final. The 2nd resurrection is clearly bodily resurrection. It is clearly the remedy for the first death, bodily death. Conversely, the 1st resurrection is a kind of remedy for the second death... That is, the 1st resurrection guarantees freedom from the 2nd death. The various symmetries suggest that the 1st resurrection, like the 2nd death, is paradoxical in character. As the 2nd death implicitly includes and accompanies an act of bodily resurrection, so the 1st resurrection implicitly includes and accompanies bodily death” (*The Returning King*, p. 180).

Conclusion #9: The living and reigning of the saints with Christ for 1,000 years speaks of their new resurrected life in Christ, whether here on earth as regenerate, or in heaven (after physical death) in the intermediate state, throughout the entire New Testament era.