

Introduction

a) Does the Future Kingdom Really Matter (Rev. 11:15)?

- Is there any practical value in knowing about the future kingdom?
- Or is this topic really only valuable to scholars to debate?
- I am going to explain why knowing what the future kingdom will look like matters greatly.
- Make sure you get this: Your view of the future kingdom shapes your priorities in the present.
- Understanding the future kingdom is not merely about eschatology but discipleship.

b) Our Two Trips to Ireland

- Before visiting Ireland in 2019 and 2025, we carefully researched where to go, stay, and eat.
- Without that preparation, we likely would have followed the usual tourist route and missed Dingle, our favorite place.
- Learning about Ireland beforehand changed how we prepared and greatly improved our experience.
- The Millennial Kingdom is similar: understanding what Scripture teaches about the future shapes how we prepare for it.
- The better we understand where history is going, the better prepared we will be for what lies ahead.

c) Why Understanding the Future Kingdom Matters Now

- Understanding the future kingdom has transformed many things in my life. From personal experience, here are some reasons why having a biblical view of the future kingdom matters now.
 1. Gives greater understanding of Jesus's parables.
 2. Gives greater understanding of the Old Testament prophets.
 3. Gives greater understanding of the book of Revelation.
 4. Jesus used rewards in the future kingdom to motivate faithfulness.
 5. Shapes your view of Israel and the Middle East and prevents Replacement Theology.
 6. Keeps you from the extremes of triumphalism, over-realized eschatology, dominionism, and nationalism.
- I asked Angie, "Why is understanding the Millennial Kingdom important to you?" She had a great answer: "Because it lays out the future kingdom and I want to be part of it."

Three Main Views of the Future Kingdom

a) Overview

- The term "Millennium" refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ described in Revelation 20:1–6.

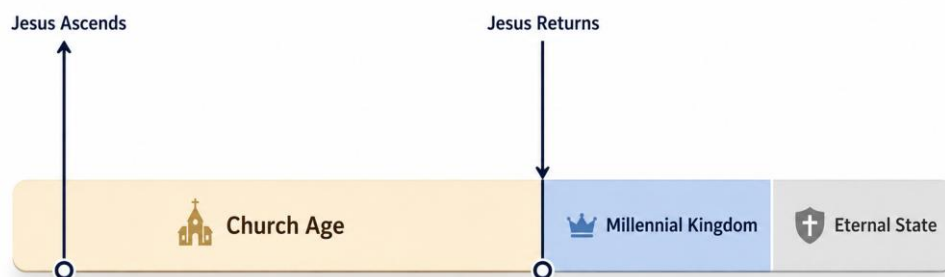
- Let's read Revelation 20:1–6.
- Scholars have generally identified three major views of the Millennium:
 1. Premillennialism
 2. Amillennialism
 3. Postmillennialism
- Each view offers a different understanding of when this reign occurs, what it looks like, and how it fits within the larger storyline of Scripture.

b) A Helpful Analogy

- I have been a pastor long enough to know that a discussion like this can seem technical or even boring to some people.
- After five minutes, some are already “scrolling” in their minds to something else, searching for the next dopamine hit.
- It reminds me of when my brother Michael recently recommended the PBS series *The Count of Monte Cristo*.
- I almost missed an incredible story because I lacked the patience to allow the characters to develop and the plot to unfold.

c) Premillennialism

Premillennialism



- Premillennialism interprets prophecy literally unless the context indicates otherwise.
- Christ's kingdom is established after His return, during a long, intermediate state before the eternal age.
- Jesus will return visibly, defeat the Antichrist and rebellious nations, and reign from Jerusalem.
- The prophets' promises will be fulfilled in a kingdom marked by righteousness, justice, peace, healing, and glory.

- During this reign, Christ will bring every enemy under His authority. After defeating death, He will hand the kingdom to the Father, and the eternal age will begin.
- Premillennialism has deep roots in the early church, with many early Christian writers expecting a future earthly reign of Christ.
- These included Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Victorinus, and Lactantius.
- Irenaeus is especially significant because of his close connection to the apostolic generation. He had known Polycarp, who had been instructed by apostles and personally acquainted with John and others who had seen the Lord.
- About 60 percent of American evangelical pastors and leaders hold this view. It is especially common among Baptists and Pentecostals.
- Influential advocates include John Piper, Wayne Grudem, David Jeremiah, and John MacArthur.

d) Amillennialism

Amillennialism



- Amillennialism views the thousand years symbolically as the period between Christ's first and second comings. We are therefore presently living in a spiritual Millennium.
- Jesus reigns from heaven, advancing His kingdom through the gospel and the church.
- Israel's promises are generally fulfilled in Christ and the church or in the eternal state.
- Some expect Israel's future conversion, but not a distinct national kingdom after Christ returns.
- The view existed before Augustine but became widely influential through his teaching in the fifth century, eventually becoming dominant in much of Western Christianity.
- The shift from the early church's premillennial hope to the amillennial view reflects a move from a Hebrew expectation of a future earthly kingdom to a more spiritualized interpretation influenced by Greek philosophy.
- About 30 percent of American Protestant pastors hold this view. It is especially common among Reformed, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Lutheran traditions.
- Influential advocates include N. T. Wright, Sam Storms, and G. K. Beale.

e) Postmillennialism

Postmillennialism



- Postmillennialism teaches that Christ will return after an extended Millennium in which His kingdom advances throughout the earth.
- Through the Spirit, the gospel, and the Great Commission, most of the world will turn to Christ, producing a “golden age” of righteousness, peace, justice, and flourishing.
- Many Postmillennialists emphasize worldwide revival and Christian dominance over the seven mountains of culture.
- The view was influential during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but declined after the Civil War and the two world wars.
- Postmillennial or dominion-oriented thinking is common within the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)—a Charismatic movement promoted by C. Peter Wagner beginning in the 1990s. It emphasizes restored apostles and prophets leading the church to advance God’s kingdom throughout society before Christ returns.
- About 10 percent of American Protestant pastors hold this view. It is found mainly in some Reformed, Presbyterian, and Charismatic circles.
- Influential advocates include Peter Wagner, Bill Johnson, Kris Vallotton, Dutch Sheets, Chuck Pierce, and Doug Wilson.

f) I-Don’t-Care-ism

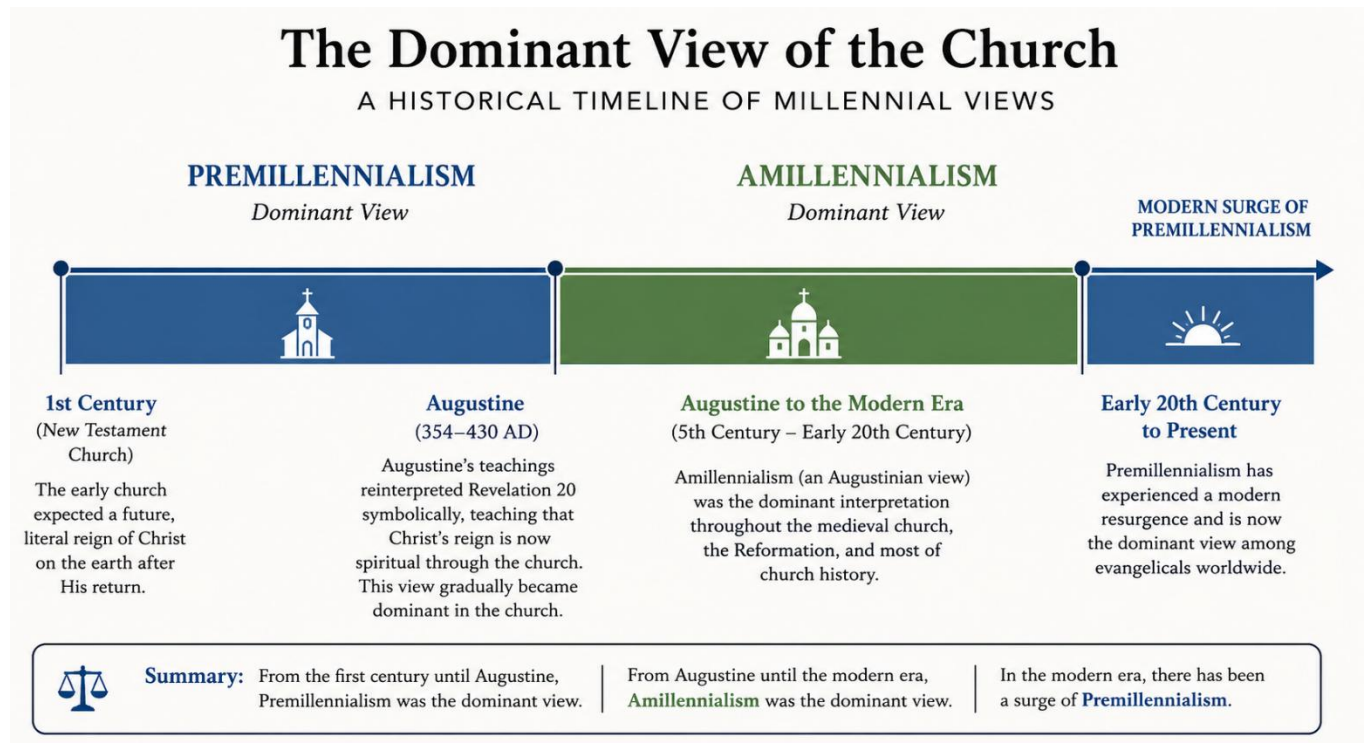
- Many regard the Millennium as irrelevant, impractical, or too complicated to study, so they simply don’t care.
- This attitude mistakenly assumes that understanding the future kingdom has little value for life in the present.

g) You-Tell-Me-ism

- Many believers simply want a trusted spiritual leader to tell them what to believe.
- They don’t follow the example of the Bereans (Acts 17:11).
- Their attitude is essentially, “Just tell me what to believe, and I will accept it without examining the Scriptures for myself.”

- Ultimately, each of us is responsible before God to seek the truth, test what we are taught, and form our convictions from His Word.

The Millennial Kingdom Throughout History



I Believe the Premillennial View Is Correct

a) My View of the Kingdom

- Jesus presently reigns from heaven and advances His kingdom through His Spirit-empowered church.
- When He returns, He will reign openly upon the earth with His church for an extended but finite period before the eternal age begins.
- Let's look at seven reasons why I believe the premillennial view is correct.

1. It Is the Most Literal Way to Read the Text.

a) The Prophetic Pattern

- Many biblical prophecies—such as those found in Isaiah and Daniel related to Jesus's first coming—have been fulfilled in concrete and historical ways.
- Therefore, the normal approach to prophetic Scripture should be to understand its language in its ordinary, grammatical, and historical sense unless the context clearly indicates symbolism.
- Some interpreters may press literal interpretation too far by refusing to recognize obvious symbolism.

- The Golden Rule of Interpretation is: “When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context . . . indicate clearly otherwise.”

b) The Most Natural Reading of Revelation 20

- Amillennial and postmillennial interpretations understand the thousand years of Revelation 20 symbolically.
- These views identify Christ’s millennial reign primarily with the present church age or a future period before His return.
- Premillennialism, by contrast, presents the most natural reading of the passage.

2. Revelation 20 Summarizes the Kingdom Foretold by the Prophets.

a) Revelation 20 Does Not Stand Alone

- Some amillennial and postmillennial interpreters argue, “The Millennial Kingdom is mentioned in only six verses. Why place so much emphasis on it?”
- Revelation 20 gives us the *timing* and *sequence* of the kingdom the prophets had already described for centuries.
- John mentions the thousand years six times in Revelation 20. That number is significant.
- Psalm 90:4 says, “For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by,” and Peter echoes this thought: “With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day” (2 Pet. 3:8).
- Whether Revelation’s thousand years should be understood as exactly one thousand calendar years can be debated.
- John’s language evokes a familiar biblical pattern: with the Lord, a thousand years are like a day (Ps. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8).
- By repeatedly emphasizing the thousand years, John is prophetically pointing to the “one day” anticipated by the prophets—the Day of the Lord.
- The Day of the Lord is when God intervenes in history to judge His enemies, deliver His people, and establish His reign over the earth.

b) The Day of the Lord Includes Judgment and Reign

- Many Christians think of the Day of the Lord only as a brief time of wrath and judgment.
- It certainly includes that, but the prophets saw the Day of the Lord as the time when God decisively intervenes in history to judge His enemies, deliver His people, restore creation, and establish His reign over the earth.
- Judgment is the opening act, but the kingdom is the goal.

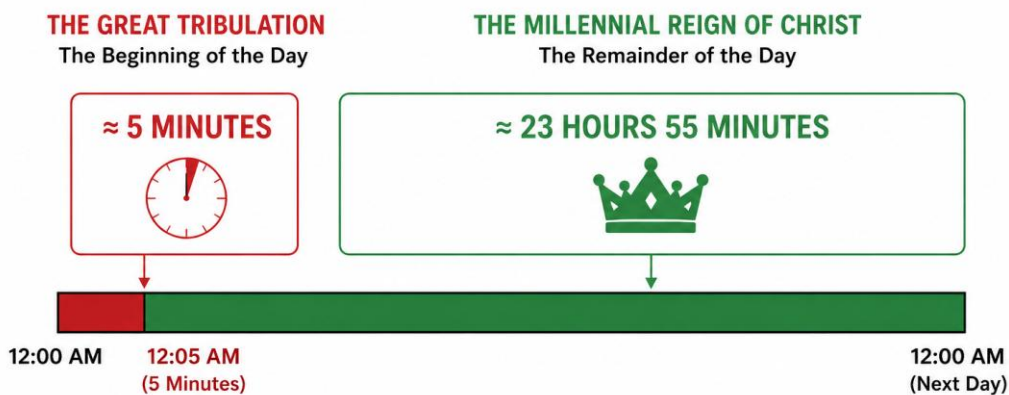
c) Isaiah and Zechariah’s Use of “In That Day”

- Joel described the Day of the Lord as both “great and very terrible” (Joel 2:14 NKJV).

- The Day of the Lord will be “great” because Jesus will reign on the earth for a thousand years.
- The Day of the Lord will be “very terrible” because the earth will experience God’s wrath in an unprecedented way.
- “In that day” – Judgement and humiliation of human pride (Isa. 2:11).
- “In that day” – The blessings of the Messiah’s reign (Isa. 4:2; 11:10).
- “In that day” refers to the Messiah judging righteously, gathering Israel, restoring peace, healing creation, and filling the earth with the knowledge of the Lord.
- The phrase does not describe one ordinary twenty-four-hour day or even a short period of time. It often describes the larger era inaugurated by the Lord’s appearing.
- Zechariah 14:9 uses “in that day” to point to when Jesus reigns over all the earth.

THE DAY OF THE LORD = 1,000 YEARS = 24 HOURS

Using a 24-Hour Day Analogy



d) Clarity to Revelation 20

- John was not creating an entirely new doctrine based on six isolated verses. He was showing us where the kingdom foretold by the prophets fits within God’s prophetic plans.
- The Day of the Lord begins dramatically with Christ’s return and judgment, but it continues through the righteous reign that follows.
- The Millennium is the kingdom phase of the Day of the Lord.
- The prophets revealed *what* Messiah’s reign would be like. Revelation 20 reveals *when* it occurs: after Christ’s return and before the final judgment and eternal state.

e) Isaiah 65 Reveals an Intermediate Kingdom

- Isaiah speaks of “new heavens and a new earth,” yet natural life continues.
- People build houses, plant vineyards, work, have children, and eventually die—although lifespans are greatly extended.

- Creation is profoundly restored: the wolf and lamb graze together, and the lion eats straw like the ox.
- This is clearly not the world as we presently know it, but neither is it the eternal state of Revelation 21–22, where there is no more death, curse, mourning, or pain.
- Revelation 20 provides the chronological framework for the kingdom the prophets had long anticipated: a glorious but finite reign of Messiah between the present age and the eternal age.

3. Revelation 20:1–6 Flows Naturally from Revelation 19:11–21

a) Does “Then I Saw” Indicate Chronology?

- “Then I saw” in Revelation 20:1 does not automatically prove chronological sequence.
- Revelation records John’s visions in the order he received them, but those visions do not always describe the events occurring in chronological order.
- Because chapter divisions were added centuries later, the immediate context must determine whether Revelation 20 continues the events of Revelation 19 or begins a recapitulation of the church age—as amillennial and postmillennial interpreters suggest.
- Several details indicate that Revelation 20 flows naturally from the preceding chapter.

b) Christ Defeats the Coalition Gathered Against Him

- Revelation 19:11–21 begins a new section revealing that Jesus is the conquering King who “judges and wages war” in righteousness.
- Against whom does He wage war? The passage identifies the beast, the false prophet, the kings of the earth, and their armies.
- Earlier in Revelation, the dragon, beast, and false prophet—the unholy trinity—send demonic spirits to gather the kings of the earth and their armies for war against God (Rev. 16:13–16).
- Revelation 19 then describes Christ defeating nearly every member of this coalition. You can see this in the chart below.

<h2>Enemies Jesus Defeats</h2> <p>Revelation 19–20</p>	
ENEMY	JESUS DEFEATS THEM
 Beast	Rev. 19:20
 False Prophet	Rev. 19:20
 Kings of the Earth	Rev. 19:21
 Armies of the Nations	Rev. 19:21
 The Dragon	?
 <i>The dragon’s defeat is addressed in Revelation 20.</i>	

c) The Defeat of the Dragon Completes the Sequence

- Notice that the dragon is the only enemy not defeated in Revelation 19. That omission is significant.
- Revelation 20 does not suddenly return to Christ's ascension and retell the entire church age, as amillennial and postmillennial interpreters argue.
- Revelation 20 continues naturally from Revelation 19. The sequence is straightforward: Christ defeats the beast, false prophet, kings, and armies; then He deals with the dragon in two phases.
- First, Satan is bound throughout Christ's millennial reign (Rev. 20:1–3).
- Second, God destroys Satan immediately after Christ's millennial reign, after he has been permitted to lead one final rebellions (Rev. 20:7–10).
- Revelation 19–20 therefore presents one continuous account of Christ defeating His enemies.
- You can see this in the chart below.

Enemies Jesus Defeats

Revelation 19–20

ENEMY	JESUS DEFEATS THEM
 Beast	Rev. 19:20
 False Prophet	Rev. 19:20
 Kings of the Earth	Rev. 19:21
 Armies of the Nations	Rev. 19:21
 The Dragon	Rev. 20:1–3; 20:10



The dragon is first bound in Revelation 20:1–3 and then finally thrown into the lake of fire in Revelation 20:10.

4. Satan Is Completely Restrained During the Millennium.

a) The Binding Is Decisive and Comprehensive

- Revelation 20:1–3 portrays Satan's binding as decisive and comprehensive, not partial or limited.
- Amillennial interpreters commonly argue that Satan's binding is limited rather than absolute.
 - Some say he can no longer prevent the gospel from spreading among the nations.
 - Others believe he is restrained from gathering the nations for the final war against Christ before God's appointed time.
- The verse doesn't align with this type of partial or limited binding.
- An angel seizes him, binds him with a great chain, throws him into the abyss, shuts it, seals it over him, and locks it.

- The cumulative force of this imagery is unmistakable: Satan is completely confined and prevented from deceiving the nations throughout the thousand years. He will literally be confined in prison, unable to do anything.

b) Satan Remains Active in the Present Age

- If the Millennium began with Christ's resurrection and ascension, then Satan should presently be imprisoned and unable to deceive the nations in the manner described.
- Yet even a cursory reading of the New Testament portrays Satan as actively deceiving and opposing people throughout the present age (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; Rev. 12:9; 1 John 5:19).
- Believers are warned to resist his schemes (Eph. 6:11), remain alert because he seeks to devour them (1 Pet. 5:8–9), and guard against his deception (2 Cor. 11:3, 14).
- These passages portray Satan as an active spiritual enemy, not as one confined in the abyss and prevented from deceiving the nations.
- These passages are difficult to reconcile with the claim that Satan is presently confined in the abyss and prevented from deceiving the nations.
- For this reason, the binding of Satan provides strong support for a future millennial kingdom after Jesus returns.

5. The First and Second Resurrections Are the Same Kind of Event.

a) The First Resurrection

- Revelation 20:4 shows the first resurrection.
- The sequence appears straightforward: believers who died throughout church history and those who die during the Great Tribulation come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years.
- Their resurrection occurs before the millennial reign, not at its conclusion.

b) The Amillennial and Postmillennial Interpretation

- Amillennial and postmillennial interpreters generally understand the "first resurrection" symbolically.
 - Some interpret it as spiritual regeneration—the believer passing from spiritual death to life at conversion.
 - Some amillennials understand it as deceased believers entering heavenly life and reigning with Christ after death.
- Several features of the passage make these interpretations difficult.

c) The Parallel Language Requires the Same Category

- The contrast in the following verse strengthens this conclusion: "The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed" (Rev. 20:5).
- The same expression—"came to life"—is used for both groups.

- If the second coming to life refers to bodily resurrection—as almost every scholar believes—the most natural reading is that the first does as well (Rev. 20:11–15).
- Premillennialism is the only view that interprets both resurrections in Revelation 20 as the same kind of event—bodily resurrection—rather than treating the first as spiritual and the second as physical despite the parallel language and immediate context.

6. The Present World Does Not Resemble Christ's Promised Reign.

a) The Condition of the Present World

- I mean no disrespect toward Jesus in saying this, but if the present condition of the world represents His promised reign over the nations, that reign appears remarkably ineffective.
- Rebellion, lawlessness, pornography, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, abortion, occultism, false religion, greed, violence, and injustice continue to flourish.
- Can this honestly be what Scripture envisions when it describes the Messiah ruling the earth in righteousness and justice?

b) Reigning With Christ Versus Christ Reigning Through the Church

- There is an important difference between Christ reigning with His people on earth and Christ reigning through His people from heaven.
- If Christ reigns with us, He remains the sovereign King, and we participate in His government under His authority.
- His success is not dependent upon the church's ability to transform the world.
- We depend upon Him; He does not depend upon us.

c) Our Hope Is the Returning King

- This gives us far greater hope than the idea that the world's transformation rests upon the present church.
- Church history offers little reason to believe that a frequently divided, compromised, and spiritually weak church will gradually eradicate rebellion, oppression, false religion, exploitation, and injustice before Jesus returns.
- Our hope is not that the church will eventually succeed where every previous generation has failed. Our hope is that the King Himself will return.
- Scripture does not portray Christ's future rule as a weak, indirect, or largely invisible reign. John heard the declaration: "You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came" (Rev. 11:17–18).
- When Jesus begins this uncontested reign, He will take His great power, confront the rebellion of the nations, judge every opposing power, and establish justice throughout the earth.
- He will not merely influence the kingdoms of this world; He will take possession of them: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

- Jesus certainly reigns now at the Father's right hand, possessing all authority in heaven and on earth.
- Yet the nations do not presently submit to that authority, and the earth does not yet experience the fullness of His righteous government.
- Revelation points forward to the day when Christ will return as King, openly exercise His authority over the nations, remove everything that opposes His rule, and establish a kingdom marked by righteousness, justice, truth, peace, and glory.

Live Now for the Coming Kingdom

a) The Faithful Will Reign With Christ

- The Millennial Kingdom is not merely about establishing the correct end-times timeline.
- It is about our future calling, our present stewardship, and the rewards Jesus has promised to those who faithfully follow Him.
- Jesus will not reign alone. He will share His kingdom authority with faithful and overcoming saints from every generation.
- Those who participate in the first resurrection will reign with Him, sit with Him on His throne, exercise authority over the nations, and help administer His righteous government throughout the earth.
- This means the question is not only, "Will I be in the kingdom?" The deeper question is, "Am I preparing now to reign with Jesus then?"

b) Remain Faithful Until the King Returns

- The King is returning, and His kingdom is coming.
- The faithful choices we make today are preparing us for the responsibilities we will carry then.
- Your vision of the future determines how you live in the present.
- Therefore, let us live now in a way that makes us ready to hear Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."