



## Dispensational Hyper-Eisegeesis on the Millennium

Written or Compiled by Thomas K. Burk

Does the Bible say that the Lord will return to reign upon the earth for a thousand years? Revelation 20:4 is the only scripture Dispensationalists have for a future 1000-year earthly reign of Jesus. This is what this ONE verse says:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

From Revelation 20:4's sixty-eight words, the Dispensationalist teaches that the following scenarios will take place during their 1000-year millennial reign...

1. a second coming of Christ
2. a bodily resurrection of the saints
3. a destruction of the antichrist
4. an earthly reign of Jesus on earth for 1000-years
5. mortals alive after the Great Tribulation, will live on into this 1000-year millennium
6. people dying at 100 years old will be considered the equivalent age of a child
7. resurrected immortals will be reigning over mortals
8. resurrected immortals will be able to disappear and reappear at will
9. resurrected immortals will have access to the expanse of the universe
10. ALL carnivores animals will become vegetarians
11. children will play with vipers
12. Jesus will sit on the physical throne of David to reign as the millennial King
13. the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:6-13 is finally accessible to man
14. a central location in Jerusalem will be the location of Jesus' earthly reign
15. a physical Christ will return to establish a 1000-year earthly reign

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But if we are to take this passage literally, which the Dispensationalist's say we should, then several problems arise for them. One is, Revelation 20:4 says that ONLY those individuals who are beheaded will be included in this reign with Christ, and that the limit of time for their life with Christ is only 1000-years. These literal points seem to be missed in the Futurist's teachings on their Millennium. Hmm...I wonder why?

To further see the errors of this future 1,000-year earthly reign, just look at what Revelation 20:4 does NOT mention...

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Since none of Dispensationalist's above 15 points are found in either Revelation 20:4, or in any of chapter 20's remaining verses, should this unsupported future 1000-year Millennium still be taught as biblical fact? Shouldn't this scriptural deficiency cause one to stop teaching these above points in favor of teaching what the Bible does say? Isn't the Apostolic faith about being insistent on having contextual accountability before determining what a true biblical doctrine is? Does it really matter what the Bible says...or does it not?

Now let's look at a few historical quotes that show what men from the first centuries thought about the teaching of a "literal" future physical 1000-year kingdom.

### **Epiphanies (c.315-403)**

"There is indeed a millennium mentioned by St. John; but **THE MOST, AND THOSE PIOUS MEN, LOOK UPON THOSE WORDS AS TRUE INDEED, BUT TO BE TAKEN IN A SPIRITUAL SENSE.**" (Epiphanies, Heresies, 77:26.)

Epiphanies says the majority's view from the godliest men of his day taught the millennium was not to be a physical reign, but a spiritual one.

### **Eusebius Pamphilius, Bishop of Caesarea, in Palestine (c. 265 - 339)**

"This same historian (Papias) also gives other accounts, which he says he adds as received by him from unwritten tradition, likewise **CERTAIN STRANGE**

**PARABLES** of our Lord, and of his doctrine and some **OTHER MATTERS RATHER TOO FABULOUS**. In these he says there would be **A CERTAIN MILLENNIUM AFTER THE RESURRECTION**, and that there would be **A CORPOREAL REIGN OF CHRIST ON THIS VERY EARTH; WHICH THINGS HE APPEARS TO HAVE IMAGINED, AS IF THEY WERE AUTHORIZED BY THE APOSTOLIC NARRATIONS, NOT UNDERSTANDING CORRECTLY THOSE MATTERS WHICH THEY PROPOUNDED MYSTICALLY IN THEIR REPRESENTATIONS**. For he was very limited in his comprehension, as is evident from his discourses; yet he was the cause why most of the ecclesiastical writers, **URGING THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN, WERE CARRIED AWAY BY A SIMILAR OPINION; AS, FOR INSTANCE, IRENAEUS, OR ANY OTHER THAT ADOPTED SUCH SENTIMENTS.**" (Book III, Ch. 39)

“Strange” and “too fabulous” (another way of saying “fictional”) doctrines about a “certain millennial reign of Christ on this very earth,” Eusebius said, is a teaching that is only “imagined” to be of “apostolic” origin. He also indicated that this Dispensational view is of a “mystical” view that even men like Irenaeus are party.

***The Hope of the Early Church, by Brian E. Daly, Page 6:***

“There is no direct evidence in these texts to confirm Schoep’s assertion that the “Ebionites” were millenarians. Indeed, **THE ONLY ANCIENT EVIDENCE** for such a view is a remark of Jerome (*In Esaiam* 66.20) that the ‘Ebionites,’ who are **‘HEIRS OF JEWISH ERROR,’ SHARE WITH THE JEWS A MATERIALISTIC EXPECTATION OF A COMING KINGDOM OF LUXURY THAT WILL LAST ONE THOUSAND YEARS**. Jerome’s other caustic allusions to millenarian hopes (e.g., *In Esaiam* 11.15-16: 35.10: 60.1: In Jer 31.28: In Zach 14.18) **IDENTIFY THEM WITH JEWS AND ‘THE JUDAIZERS AMONG US** (nostril Judaicantes).’ **A PHRASE WHICH SEEMS TO REFER TO THE CHRISTIAN MILLENARIANS** of his own day.”

Wow! Through Jerome’s words we find that the “only ancient evidence” of this mystical 1000-year millennial kingdom comes from a “Jewish expectancy,” which he says is a “Jewish error.” He also says that those who teach this doctrine are “heirs of Jewish error,” and thereby are considered to be the “Jews and Judaizers” among the Church.

Another objection is the lack of scriptural witness for this literal "thousand year" reign. Remember, Revelation 20:4 is the **ONLY** scripture that expressly mentions a millennial kingdom. This fact should be a great concern for those who want to rightly divide the word of truth. If this coming earthly reign is such an important coming dispensation, as Futurist’s claim, why didn’t the prophets or the apostles mention it at least one other time? To make matters worse for a future earthly millennial reign, the Bible even teaches against such a 1000-year scenario. Look at the following:

*The Hope of the Early Church, by Brian E. Daly, Page 127*

1. All of the OT passages normally linked with the "thousand years" of Revelation 20 to produce "the millennium" are interpreted for us **under inspiration** within the NT itself! These passages are - Isa. 2; 9:6-7; 11; 25-27; 49; 65; Jer. 23; 30-31; Eze. 34-37; Joel 2-3; Amos 9; Zech. 12-14; and Mal. 3-4. Furthermore, **none** of the imagery used in these passages ("lambs w/ lions," "beating swords into plowshares," etc.) is even **mentioned** in Rev. 20, the **only** passage speaking of the "thousand years"! The nation of Israel is not in view, nor is an earthly reign or a rebuilt temple! To cram all these passages together and then arbitrarily interpret them within the context of Rev. 20 is nothing but hyper-eisegesis.
2. 2 Peter 3 without question mentions **absolutely nothing** about a millennial kingdom. In fact, such a notion is ruled out by placing the destruction of this earth and the creation of the new earth within the same time-frame as the Second Coming. This reforming of the planet occurs just before the eternal state per Rev. 6-7.
3. Paul sets forth **one** coming, **one** resurrection, and then **the end** -- 1 Cor. 15. The only reign of Christ mentioned is the **present** one.
4. Scripture teaches **one** resurrection of **both** saved and unsaved **at the last day** (John 5:29; 11:24; Heb. 9:27 w/ Rev. 20:11-12).
5. The "rapture" (i.e., our gathering together to Him) occurs **at His coming** per John 6:39,54; 1 Cor. 15:23; Col. 3:4; 1 Thes. 4:14-17; 2 Thes. 2:1; 1 Peter 1:13; 5:4. Further, there is nothing "secret" about it (cf. Matt. 24:27 and Luke 17:24)!
6. The righteous and the wicked are separated **at His coming** per Matt. 13; 24:37-40; 25:31-46; Luke 17:29-35. Note especially the word "then" in Matt. 25:31. It is **at this time** that saint & sinner alike are judged -- **not** after 1,000 years! See Ecc. 12:14; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 16:27; 24:41-46; Romans 2:5-6; 1 Cor. 3:13; Col. 3:4; 1 Thes. 5:1-10; 2 Thes. 1:1-10; 2 Tim. 2:4; 4:1; Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 5:4; 1 John 2:28; 3:2. Thus the Second Coming is the **same** day as "the day of judgment" (2 Peter 2:9) -- the **same** day that this earth is destroyed per 2 Peter 3:7-12! Where is this "thousand year" earthly kingdom in all of this? It is this day that is pictured in Rev. 6:16-17 and 11:15-18. Note the parallel between Rev. 11:15 and 1 Cor. 15:24-28, where Paul describes "the end" **immediately following** His coming. This is why the **next** conscious moment after death is the Judgment (**not** the millennium) -- Heb. 9:27.
7. If God's people are reigning with Christ **on the earth** during a literal 1,000 year kingdom, then how can the Kingdom be **descending from heaven** in Rev.21:2?
8. To go even further, we see "thousand" and "thousands" used symbolically all over Scripture - Gen. 24:60; Ex. 20:6; 34:7; Lev. 26:8; Deut. 1:11; 5:10; 7:9; 32:30; 33:2; Joshua 23:10; 1 Sam. 18:7-8; 1 Chron. 16:15; Job 9:3; 33:23; Psalms 3:6; 50:10; 68:17; 84:10; 90:4; 91:7; 105:8; Ecc. 6:6; 7:28; Song 5:10; Isa. 30:17; 60:22; Jer. 32:18; Eze. 48; Dan. 7:10; 11:12; Micah 6:7; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19; 2 Peter 3:8; Jude 14.

## WHAT IS THE MILLENNIUM?

The following is my summation of the biblical understanding of Revelation's 1,000 year "Millennium" as found on my website [www.ontimejournal.com](http://www.ontimejournal.com):

The term "thousand years," as found in the millennial teachings of Revelation 20, **refers to a symbolic and not a literal period of time.** The number "thousand" is found in numerous passages in the Bible where it is used as a symbolic number and not an exact one-thousand year time period. One of these is Deuteronomy 7:9: "[Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a THOUSAND generations.](#)"

If this thousand is literal, then no one in our generation, or any soon to come, need concern themselves with the "last days!" Why? Because a biblical generation is usually 40 years, so if this is a literal one-thousand years, we would then have 40,000 years of covenant and mercy before an "endtime" could come. Of course Deuteronomy's verse, as does Revelation 20's, uses "thousand" as a representative time period denoting *perfection* in God.

This symbolism is clearly seen in Psalms 50:10 when it proclaims God owns "the cattle upon a thousand hills." The Psalmist here is not suggesting that those cattle found on the one-thousand-and-first hill belong to someone else; rather he was symbolically describing God's perfect ownership of all cattle everywhere. Revelation 20 similarly is not speaking of a literal one-thousand year earthly reign of Jesus Christ. This becomes even more evident when one realizes that the Bible has not one scripture that speaks of such an earthly event!

The millennium in Revelation 20 refers to **an interlude of perfection, which happened between Calvary and the 70 AD return of Jesus Christ.** Satan was bound for a period during this season until being loosed toward its end to tempt those in the Church willing to return back to the bondage system of "works of the Law." (See Galatians 2:16-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; 2 Peter 3:1-4) This was the very system from which Jesus had before set them free. (See Galatians 2:16, 3:3; Romans 6:23) This time period ended abruptly when the Law system received its fatal blow when its city (Jerusalem) and sanctuary (Temple) was destroyed in 70 AD. Without these necessary elements in place, there can be no true biblical Law-keeping. (See Hebrews 8:8-13, 9:15; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 37:26)

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