

"The Heart Response to a Perfect Earth" **Revelation 20**

After the tribulation on the earth and the return of the King to the earth to destroy all the kings of the earth, Jesus will set up His earthly kingdom and rule over the whole world in perfect conditions on the earth.

JESUS CHRIST WILL REIGN ON THE EARTH FOR 1000 YEARS, 20:1-15

The transition between Revelation 19 and Revelation 20 is the transition to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic contract and the completion of the kingdom program of God. The kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord (Revelation 11:15), the King of Kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). He will reign for 1000 years and then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom up to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:23-28) so that God may be all in all.

Excursus 1: Review of Eschatological Frameworks

Three theological grids: the postmillennial, the amillennial, and the premillennial take their names and point of departure from Revelation 20:1-8, where Christ is said to reign 1,000 years, a period which has been called the “millennium.” The word “millennium” comes from the Latin word for 1000. The Greek word for “1000” is *χίλιοι* *chilioi*, from which chiliasm is derived. For further study of these three different theological positions, see J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, chapter 22 (XXII).

A. Postmillennialism

The postmillennial school interprets the millennium to be a period (may be a distinct 1000 year period) of great spiritual blessing fulfilling millennial promises accomplished through preaching the gospel to everyone. After the millennium, Jesus Christ returns. In the past 30 years, postmillennial thinking is found in dominion theology, theonomy, and Christian reconstructionism. These teachings encourage the new Israel, the Church, to control or take dominion of all secular institutions by subduing structural evil in society under the civil and moral laws of God, including the OT. Francis Schaeffer’s 1981 book, *A Christian Manifesto*, provided a philosophical base for the movement. Modern proponents include Greg Bahnsen, David Chilton, and Gary North.

B. Amillennialism

Amillennial interpretation basically says that there will be no distinct 1000-year period, and that Christ’s reign is being fulfilled either in the saints on earth or in heaven. Satan was bound at the first advent of Christ. After Jesus Christ returns, the eternal state begins. Adherents include Augustine and B.B. Warfield. Recent commentators include Philip E. Hughes, John Goldingay, Joyce Baldwin, Sinclair Ferguson, and Greg Beale.

C. Premillennialism

Premillennialists interpret Revelation 20:1-8 to mean a literal thousand year reign of Christ on the earth, which requires Jesus Christ to return before the millennium to establish a literal, earthly kingdom as promised. Recent commentators include John Walvoord, Alan Johnson, Stephen Miller, Leon Wood, and Robert Thomas.

Usually three other features of the premillennial viewpoint heavily influence the interpretive process:

1. Literal/grammatical/historical interpretation.
This approach takes the normal, ordinary meaning of words unless the context or comparison with other similar biblical genres give clues of figurative or symbolic meanings. This approach follows the patterns provided by the actual, historic fulfillment of many OT prophecies in similar genres (especially Daniel, and other OT prophecies regarding the 1st advent of Jesus Christ).
2. Distinction between Israel and the Church.
This interpretive approach assumes that even though there is no distinction today between Jew and Gentile in the Church, the Body of Christ, God’s Word still promises a future for the physical descendants of Abraham (Romans 9—11) in fulfillment of all the promises God made to Abraham and his physical descendants.
3. Correlation of Revelation with OT prophetic portions, especially Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:24-27).

Correlation of events with the Lord’s Olivet Discourse.

Excursus 2: Introductory Table Comparing the Olivet Discourse to Events of Christ’s Coming to Earth

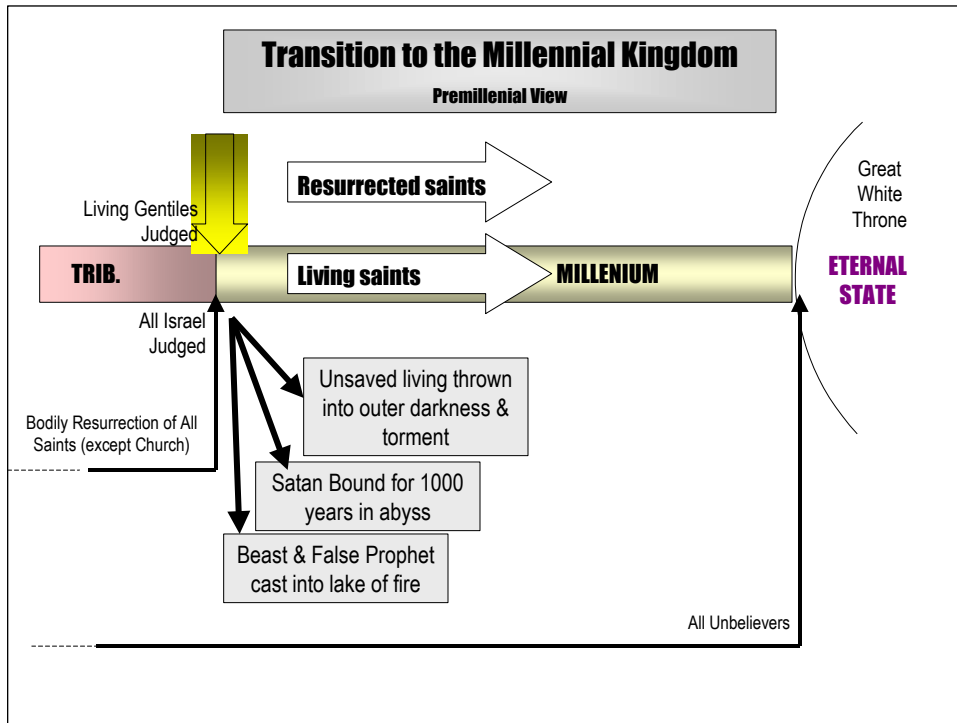
CONTENT/SUBJECT	MARK	MATTHEW	LUKE
Predicts Temple destruction	13:1-2	24:1-2	21:5-6
Questions from disciples about signs of the end	13:3-4	24:3	21:7

OLIVET DISCOURSE PROPER			
The Tribulation Period			
A. 1 st half of 70 th week	13:5-8	24:4-8	21:8-11
B. 2 nd half of 70 th week	13:9-13	24:9-14	21:12-19
C. Signs	13:13-23	24:15-28	21:20-22
Second Advent of Christ	13:24-26	24:29-30	21:25-27

<p>Regathering of Israel (and saved Gentiles) Cf. Isa. 27:12; 43:5-7; Jer. 12:15; 24:6; Ezek. 28:25-26; Amos 9:14-15. Also, Dt. 30:3-4; Ezek. 20:33-44; 37:1-14 (dry bones)</p>	<p>13:27</p>	<p>24:31</p>	<p>21:28</p>
<p>Instructions and warnings</p>	<p>13:28-37</p>	<p>24:32-51</p>	<p>21:29-36</p>
<p>Judgments at His Coming (Matthew only)</p>			
<p>A. On Israel</p>	<p>25:1-30</p>		
<p>Parable of the 10 Virgins: Church or Israel? → Israel’s professing remnant</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. resumes chronology from 24:31 2. wedding feast happens during the millennium 3. scene: virgins waiting for Bridegroom to return with His Bride for the feast. 4. even the unwise virgins mentioned as meeting the Bridegroom – get shut out of feast <p>Parable of the Talents → Israel = spiritual condition shown by how they (the Jews) used the great privileges given by God to His people.</p> <p>Unsaved – prohibited from the kingdom (Matt. 25:30)</p> <p>Saved – enter the kingdom (cf. Isa. 1:27; *4:3-4; *Zech. 13:9; Jer. 31:33-34; Ezek. 11:19; 36:25-26; Zeph. 3:12-13)</p> <p>Rom. 11:25-26 “all” Israel will be saved = God will deliver the nation Israel from (1) every spiritual rebel who is a Jew and (2) from every enemy.</p> <p>Not spiritual salvation for every living, regathered Jew. 2/3 of the nation is removed, and the 1/3 remaining group are those who are already saved by God and who then enter the kingdom.</p>			
<p>B. On living Gentiles</p>	<p>25:31-46</p>		

Issue: How did the Gentiles treat the Jews, especially the 144,000?
 Relationship to Jesus Christ shown by how we treat those who belong to Him.

Outcome:
 a) Saved – enter the kingdom: Matt. 25:31-40
 b) Unsaved – prohibited from kingdom: Matt. 25:41-46



END EXCURSUS

1 The glorious Lamb sets up perfect earthly conditions for His 1000 year reign, 20:1-6

A. Satan is bound for the 1000 years, 20:1-3

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

key → symbol of authority

chain → symbol of binding and loosing the person of Satan.

Location → abyss

Length → 1000 years – literal in this portion → “millennium”
 preview of brief release at end. Cf. 20:7-8

This might also include all the demons that were released earlier during the judgments on the earth (Rev. 9).

B. Saints are resurrected to reign with Christ 1000 years, 20:4-6

Who gets into the kingdom? What do I do?

John 3:3 See also Col. 1:13-14

Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

1. All the dead saints from all time are raised to reign with Christ on earth, 20:4

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

a. "They" and "them" refer to all the saints from all time who will sit on thrones and judge during the millennial kingdom.

Matt. 19:27-28. See also Luke 22:29-30

b. Martyrs and Tribulation saints receive special mention. Why? The Church saints were already raised at the Rapture 7 years earlier.

2. Structure of the text: key → 1st sent of v.5 is parenthetical to jump to the end of the 1000 year reign of Jesus, 20:5a.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.

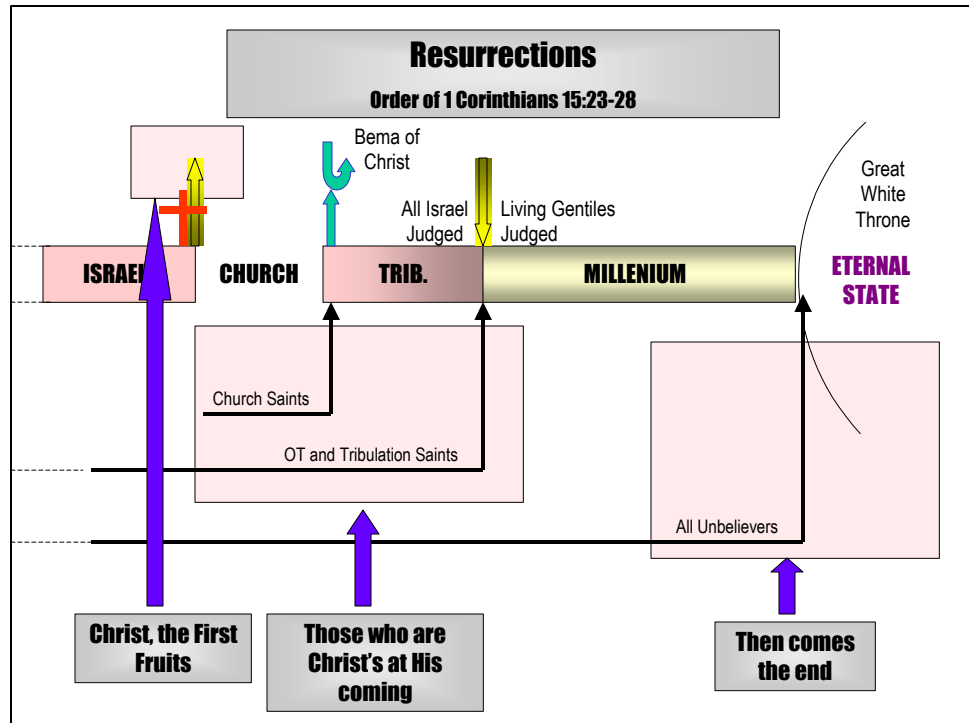
3. All the saints in the 1st resurrection are blessed and holy and reign for 1000 years, 20:5b-6

This is the first resurrection.⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

4. The second death has no power over the saints, 20:6b.

All the unsaved dead will be raised at the end of the millennium and sent to the "second death," 20:5a, 6b. The second death is the lake of fire (20:14).

Sequence of events: first resurrection and second death in relation to 1000-year period.
 Sequence in God’s resurrection program – 1 Cor. 15



Saints who reign = all resurrected saints from all time

Here in Rev. 20:4-6, the emphasis is on the martyrs of the Tribulation period – why? The Church age saints were already raised.

The Reward of Reigning With Christ

- Luke 19:15-19
- Matt. 25:19-23
- Rev. 3:21
- Rev. 2:26-28

For an extensive description of the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, consult J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things To Come*, pages 487-490. Also consult the additional handout entitled, "The Coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the King, and His Kingdom: A Preliminary Attempt at Harmony of Selected Prophetic Scriptures."

2 At the end, a final rebellion against perfect conditions results in the lake of fire, 20:7-15

A. The deceived people alive during Jesus' perfect reign will rebel temporarily, 20:7-9

Release (20:7)

Rebellion (20:8)

Result (20:9)

B. The devil will be removed eternally into the lake of fire, 20:10.

It may be at this point that the Lord Jesus Christ delivers over the earthly kingdom to His Father, so that the earthly kingdom merges with the eternal, heavenly kingdom, and so that God may be all in all.

C. All the unsaved dead will be judged forever in the lake of fire, 20:11-15

1. All the unsaved dead will appear before Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne, 20:11

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

location – suspended in mid-air (cf. 21:1; *2 Pet. 3:10-13)

10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells

2. Jesus Christ will judge the unsaved dead according to perfect records, 20: 12-13.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and ^bbooks were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.
13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds.

Why is "the dead" referenced here? Because only unbelievers' bodies are still in the place of the dead - Hades, the grave.

- a. Books are opened to judge the unsaved based on their works.
- b. The Book of Life is opened to double check for names. No one at this judgment has their names written in the Book of Life.

3. Everyone at the Great White Throne judgment is thrown into the lake of fire, 20:14-15.

14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- a. Death and Hades are thrown into the lake of fire, 20:14a
More certain than death is the death of death.

All who died physically and were in Hades are found unworthy and cast into the lake of fire. (cf. Rev. 1:18)

In AV sheol (OT) and Hades (NT) incorrectly translated "hell."

Both: intermediate state, never the eternal state

- b. The second death = the lake of fire, 20:14b.
Remember the story about the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16).

In 19:20, Antichrist and the False Prophet were the first 2 thrown into the lake of fire. Then, Satan. Then, death and Hades.

NOT: 1) annihilation; 2) soul sleep; 3) a 2nd chance, but eternally burning fire, torment, agony, pain as punishment (Matt. 25:41, 46).

No rest. No escape, No do-overs.

NOT: *Love Wins*, Rob Bell.

- c. Every unbeliever who died physically was in Hades and will be found unworthy of heaven. These are then cast into the lake of fire forever, 20:15.