

Amillennialism

A theology of the church as the "new Israel" (or a continuing remnant of OT Israel that includes Gentiles) that reigns with Christ in the present millennial church age

Amillennialism is also called...

- *"No millennium" ("a" = "no") is the actual meaning)*
- *Realized millennium/eschatology*
- *Inaugurated eschatology*



Two Key Millennial Questions

1. When? Will Christ return before or after the millennium?
2. What? All agree there will be a millennium, but what kind will it be?

Time

**When is the Millennium?
Before/after Christ's Return?
How long is it?**

Nature

What kind of Millennium?

Amil

- Between 1st & 2nd advents
- Before the Second Coming
- Indefinite length

- Spiritual kingdom of Christ
- The present age itself

Postmil

- No Specific Beginning Point
- Before the Second Coming
- Indefinite length (but a very few say it is a *literal* 1000 years, such as Boettner & Chilton)

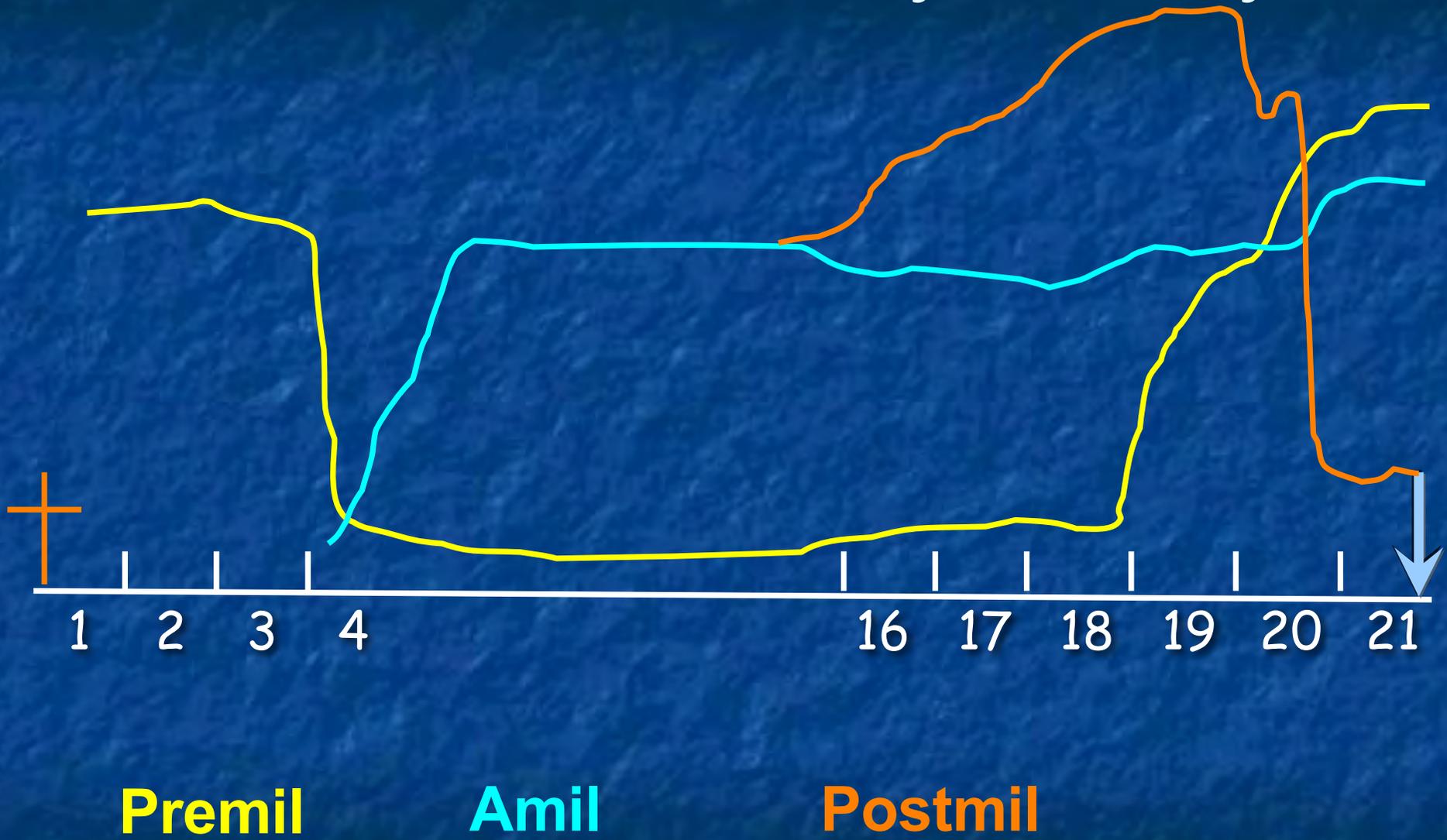
- Literal rule of the Church on earth without Christ present
- Similar to the present age (sin, marriage, birth & death present but greatly reduced)

Premil

- Future
- After the Second Coming
- Literal 1000 years

- Literal rule of Christ on earth
- Similar to postmil except Jewish elements, topographical changes, etc.

Millennial Advocates by Century



Amillennialism



Amillennial Arguments

1. The 1000 years noted in Revelation 20:1-6 is **not a literal thousand years.**

2. The **Abrahamic Covenant:**
 - (a) **has been fulfilled** already (Josh. 21:43-45; 1 Kings 4:21),
 - (b) **will be fulfilled** in the new earth literally and eternally (Hoekema, 185-86), or
 - (c) **has implied conditions** (i.e., is not unconditional in nature).

Amillennial Arguments

3. Since Israel failed to keep the Mosaic Covenant, God rejected the nation and is now fulfilling His promises originally for the nation through Jesus. Therefore, **the Church (or Jesus) is the "New Israel"** and there is no future ethnic Israel.

The "New Israel" Teaching

A. Amillennial: "The new Israel" or "The Israel of God"

1. John Calvin: "...**the Israel of God**...includes all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, who were united into one church."
2. Matthew Henry: "...the law of love must be conveyed with new obligations to **the new Israel of God**, to the gospel church..."
3. K.L. & M.A. Schmidt (TDNT, 1976): "What is true of ancient Israel is applied by the apostle to **the new Israel**, the ἁγιοί, the Church of God in Jesus Christ."

The "New Israel" Teaching

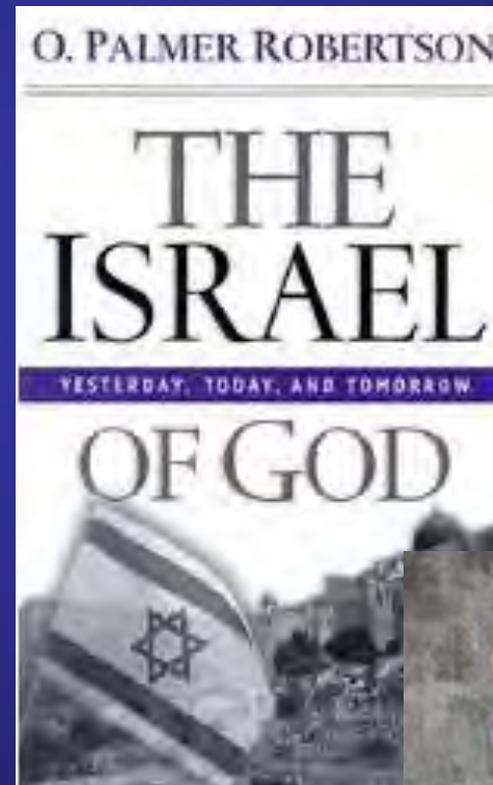
A. Amillennial: "The new Israel" or "The Israel of God"

5. James Smith (1992): "Second, **the people of God are called "Israel."** The remnant of the old Israel (v. 13) plus the converted Gentiles would constitute the New Israel (Gal 6:16). Messianic Israel would be a nation based on grace not race, on faith, not biological descent (Matt 21:43; 1 Pet 2:9)."
6. G. K. Beale (1998): "To identify 'Israel' with only the ethnic nation would be introducing a new idea into the letter [to the Galatians]."

The "New Israel" Teaching

A. Amillennial: "The new Israel" or "The Israel of God"

6. O. Palmer Robertson (2000): "Paul indicates that all believers in Christ, whether or not they are Jews externally, are truly **the Israel of God.**"



The "New Israel" Teaching

B. Covenant Premillennial: "Spiritual Israel" or "The true Israel of God"

1. G. E. Ladd (1977): "[Paul] applies prophecies to the church which in their Old Testament setting belong to literal Israel; he calls the church sons, the seeds of Abraham. He calls believers the true circumcision. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Paul sees the church as **spiritual Israel**."

The "New Israel" Teaching

B. Covenant Premillennial: "Spiritual Israel" or "The true Israel of God"

2. Wayne Grudem (1994): "What further statement could be needed in order for us to say with assurance that the church has now become **the true Israel of God** and will receive all the blessings promised to Israel in the Old Testament?"

The "New Israel" Teaching

C. Dispensational: "A new Israel"

Eugene H. Merrill: "Even Israel's failure, however, would not imperil the purposes of God, for, as New Testament revelation makes clear, the Lord Jesus Christ—the suffering Servant of Isaiah—is in Himself a "new Israel," as is His Body the church. Until its era is done, the church has been commissioned to transmit the message of redemption—a task Israel failed to do. But praise be to God, His promise to Israel is not abrogated—not by Israel's Old Testament disobedience or by the subsequent role of the church.

The "New Israel" Teaching

C. Dispensational: "A new Israel"

(continued) "For He will regenerate His ancient people and thus qualify them in ages to come to bring to fruition the grand design for which He had called and elected them (Lev. 26:40–45; Deut. 30:1–10; Jer. 31:27–34; 33:19–26; Ezek. 36:22–38; Rom. 11:25–32). This is the theology of the Pentateuch."

More Amillennial Arguments

- **Christ is the theme of OT prophecy (not Israel) as He is the True Israel**
- **Canaan is a type of the whole earth**

Who is "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16)?

"Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, **even** to the Israel of God" (NIV).

"May God's peace and mercy be upon all who live by this principle; **they are** the new people of God" (NLT).

καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι
τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν,
εἰρήνη ἐπ' αὐτούς καὶ
ἔλεος **καὶ** ἐπὶ τὸν
Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ
(Greek).

"And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, **and** upon the Israel of God" (NAU).

"...and (*kai*) the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16)

"...**even** the
Israel of God"
(NIV)

Unusual
use of *kai*

= All
Christians

Church = Israel

"...**and** the
Israel of God"
(NAU)

Normal
use of *kai*

= Jewish
Christians

Church ≠ Israel

Is there a future for ethnic believing Israel?

**Dispensational
Premillennialism**

**Amillennialism &
Postmillennialism**

**Church
& Israel
distinct**

**Israel
has a
future**

**Church
is new
Israel**

**Israel
has no
future**

**Covenant
Premillennialism**

Kingdom Aspects

-----The Universal Kingdom-----

-----The Spiritual Kingdom-----



Revelation 20:1-6

- Satan bound 1000 years (1-3)
- Saints come to life
= first resurrection (4b, 5b)
- Saints reign 1000 years (4c, 6b)
- Second resurrection (5, 13)

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 I beseech you, brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 I have written unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the grace of God, that the Gentiles should be sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to speak of anything, unless I have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jeru-

20 build upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, whom he was not taking for Jerusalem may be called of the saints;

22 But now having no place in these parts, and having great desire these many years, I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

24 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

25 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them in carnal things,

26 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them in carnal things, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

27 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's

28 that do not believe in Jesus, and that my service which ye do for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

29 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

1 COMMEND unto you Phoebe, my sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchréa: That ye receive her in the house, as becometh saints, and ye assist her in whatsoever business she shall need of you.

2 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

3 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on me.

4 Salute Amplias my beloved, and my fellowlabourer, and my beloved Onesiphorus, who hath often refreshed me, and hath strengthened me.

5 Greet Amphius my beloved, and my fellowlabourer, and my beloved Epaphroditus, who also were in the Lord before me.

6 Greet Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

7 household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

8 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, my beloved Persis, which laboureth much in the Lord.

9 Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

10 Salute Asyncretus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

11 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

12 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

13 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions, and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

14 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words deceive the hearts of the simple.

15 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

16 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

17 Timothy, my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.



The Angel with the Great Chain (20:1)

Art By Pat Marvenko Smith Copyright 1982/1992
1-800-327-7330 www.revelationillustrated.com



"He seized the dragon... and bound him for 1000 years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore..."
(20:2-3a)



Is Satan bound now?

Amillennialists say Satan is bound now from preventing the extension of the church.

True, but this text is not talking about preventing the spread of the gospel. It says **he will not deceive nations.**

Does Satan deceive nations now?

Some Amils say "No"...

For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could **tie him up** and then plunder his house (Matt. 12:29)

¹⁸[Jesus told the seventy-two disciples], "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! ¹⁹Look, **I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy**, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you" (Luke 10:17-18)

The time for judging this world has come, when **Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out** (John 12:31).

In this way, **[Christ] disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross** (Col. 2:15).

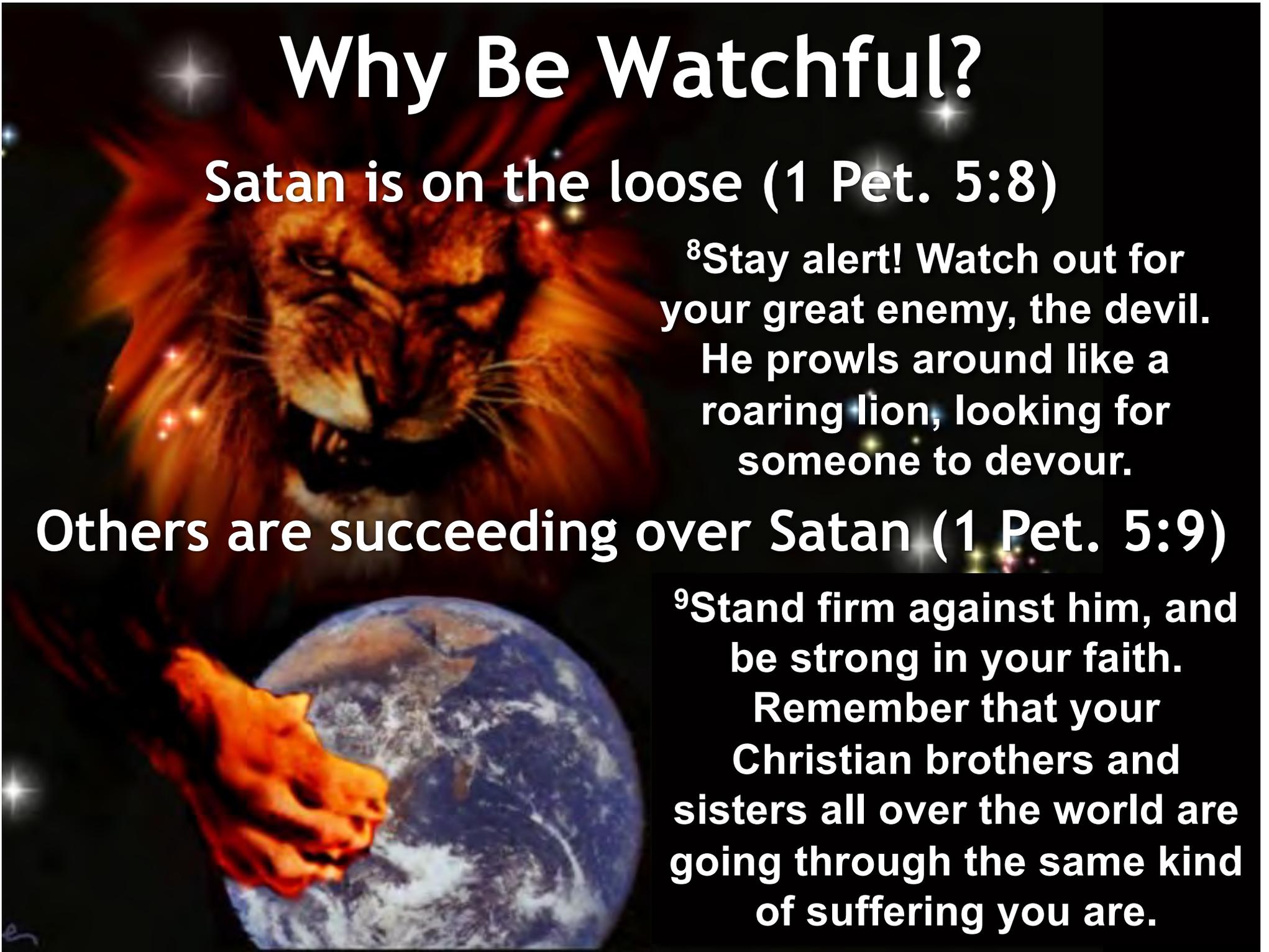
Why Be Watchful?

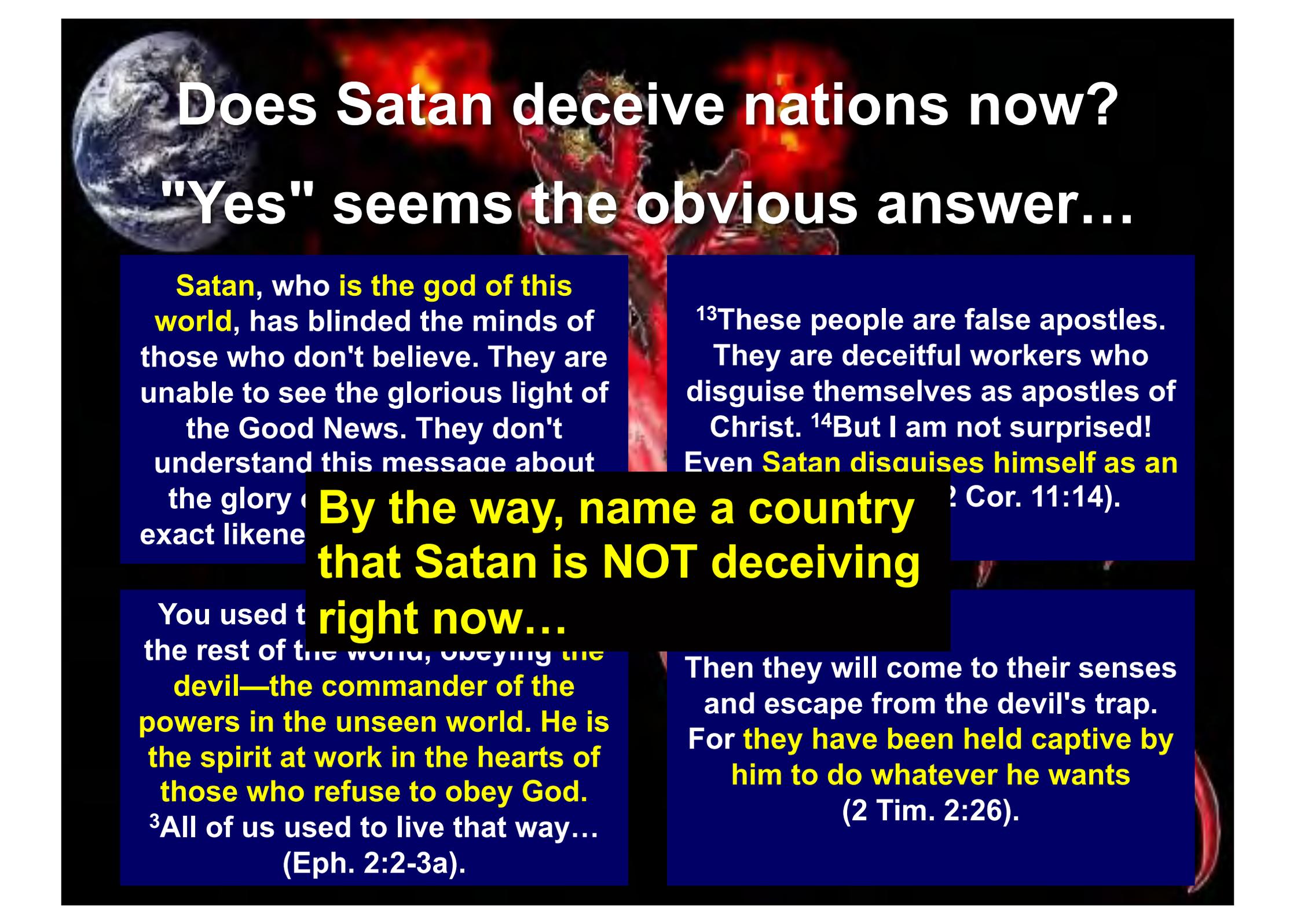
Satan is on the loose (1 Pet. 5:8)

⁸Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Others are succeeding over Satan (1 Pet. 5:9)

⁹Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your Christian brothers and sisters all over the world are going through the same kind of suffering you are.





Does Satan deceive nations now?

"Yes" seems the obvious answer...

Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about

the glory of
exact likeness

By the way, name a country that Satan is NOT deceiving

right now...

You used to be like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

³All of us used to live that way... (Eph. 2:2-3a).

¹³These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴But I am not surprised! Even **Satan disguises himself as an** (2 Cor. 11:14).

Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants (2 Tim. 2:26).

Revelation 20:1-3 (NAU)

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ²And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and 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.

Revelation 20:4 (NAU)

⁴Then 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.

Revelation 20:5-6 (NAU)

⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed 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.

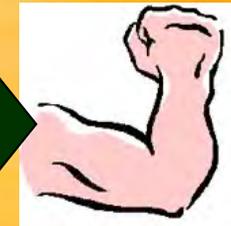
Revelation 20:4-6 Diagrammed

4^band they came to life and reigned with Christ for a **thousand years**.



4^aThen 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...

1000 years



5^bThis is the **first resurrection**. 6^aBlessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power...

6^bbut they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a **thousand years**.

5^aThe rest of the dead did not come to life until the **thousand years** were completed.

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Beale

Response

There is
consistent
figura
of num
elsewh
Revela
(p. 995),

All
literal
v. 2-3)
7:1)
ers (9:16)
nes (16:21)

"The twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel are literally twelve (21:12-14). The seven churches are in seven literal cities. Yet **confirmation of a single number in Revelation as symbolic is impossible**"

Robert L. Thomas, Revelation 8-22,
An Exegetical Commentary
(Chicago: Moody, 1995), 408-9

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Beale

The context has figures such as a chain, Abyss, dragon, serpent, locked, sealed, & beast.

Response

The Abyss is a literal place (Luke 8:1) where demons are chained (2 Pet. 2:4) but can be unlocked (Rev. 9:1-2), so why can't they be *actually restrained* there?

Also, the designations at the left are titles for the *literal* Satan and Antichrist.

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Beale

The entire book has a predominantly figurative tone as in multiples of a thousand in the book (5:11; 7:4-9; 9:16; 14:1; 21:16; p. 973).

Response

The number of completeness is not 1000 but seven.

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Beale

The OT contains figurative use of "1000" (p. 995).

Response

"With the LORD, a day is as a thousand years" (Ps. 90:4) has a symbolic use of the word "day" but makes no sense unless "thousand" is understood literally.

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Beale

Jews and early Christians used "1000" years as a figure for the eternal blessings of the redeemed (pp. 1018-21).

Response

In actuality, the 6000-year idea of rabbis and early Christians assumed a *literal* 1000 years as a "Sabbath." It was the *amillennial Augustine* who taught that the "eighth" day signified eternity (*Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons* 259.2; *City of God* 20.7)

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Beale

The first "came to life" is a "spiritual resurrection" (20:4) but the second is a physical one (20:5).

Response

- Why see the same verb *differently* in same text?
- "Came to life" *never denotes to a "spiritual resurrection"* in the Bible.
- "Resurrection" always denotes *physical* bodies.
- Believers are spiritually alive *now*, so no need!

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

Beale

The number "1000" is for the "fullness of time" and thus symbolizes an indefinite era as in Psalm 50:10 and 2 Peter 3:8.

Response

Psalm 50:10

2 Peter 3:8

Does 1000 years mean 1000 years?

All scholars before AD 300 were premillennial

Clement of Rome

Ignatius

Papias

The Didache

The Epistle of Barnabas

The Shepherd of Hermas

Justin Martyr

Melito of Sardis

Theophilus of Antioch

Apollinaris of Hierapolis

Irenaeus

Hippolytus

Clement of Alexandria

Tertullian

Julius Africanus

Cyprian

Nepos

Coracion

Commodian

Victorinus of Pettau

Methodius

Lactantius

After AD 300, the 1000 years began to be spiritualized by Augustine, Jerome, Theodoret and others

Where do the saints rule (20:4)?

Amils often say in heaven

But Revelation says it is on earth

- "And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign **on the earth**" (5:10).
- No change of location is noted from verse 3 (on earth) to verse 4, so we should assume verses 4-6 also to be on earth.

When do the saints rule (20:4)?

Amils claim it is now

But Revelation says it is future

- "And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they **will** reign on the earth" (5:10).
- "...they **will** be priests of God and of Christ and **will** reign with Him for a thousand years" (20:6).

The First Resurrection (20:4)

John equated two events, for he saw that people **"came to life"** (ἐζήσαν) at the **"first resurrection"**

"came to life" (from ζάω, "to live") can mean:

- **Physical resurrection** (1:18; 2:8)

^{NLT} Revelation 1:18 I am the **living one**. I died, but look-- I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.

^{NLT} Revelation 2:8 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna. This is the message from the one who is the First and the Last, who was dead but is now **alive**:

The First Resurrection (20:4)

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"**came to life**" (from ζάω, "to live") can mean:

- **Physical resurrection** (1:18; 2:8)
- **Physical existence** (16:3; 19:20)

^{NAU} Revelation 16:3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea... and every **living** thing in the sea died.

^{NLT} Revelation 19:20b ... Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown **alive** into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

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"came to life" (from ζάω, "to live") can mean:

- **Physical resurrection** (1:18; 2:8)
- **Physical existence** (16:3; 19:20)
- **Spiritual existence** (3:1; 7:17; 13:14)

^{NLT} Revelation 3:1 "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis..." I know... that you have a reputation for being **alive**-- but you are dead.

^{NAU} Revelation 7:17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will... guide them to springs of the water of **life**..."

The First Resurrection (20:4)

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"came to life" (from ζάω, "to live") can mean:

- **Physical resurrection** (1:18; 2:8)
- **Physical existence** (16:3; 19:20)
- **Spiritual existence** (3:1; 7:17; 13:14)

So which of these three nuances is best in 20:4?

How can one tell?

The First Resurrection (20:4)

John equated two events, for he saw that people
"came to life" (ἐζήσαν) at the "first resurrection"

"resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in the NT only means...

- **Physical resurrection**
- ~~Physical existence~~
- ~~Spiritual existence~~

The First Resurrection (20:4)

John equated two events, for he saw that people **"came to life"** (ἐζήσαν) at the **"first resurrection"**

"resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in the NT only means...

- **Physical resurrection**

^{NLT} John 11:25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.

^{NIV} 1 Cor. 15:12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Same physical resurrection nuance in 1 Cor. 15:13, 21, 42

The First Resurrection (20:4)

John equated two events, for he saw that people
"came to life" (ἐζήσαν) at the "first resurrection"

"resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) in the NT only means...

- **Physical resurrection** is also the clear meaning of the same word "**resurrection**" (ἀνάστασις) in verse 5.
- Would it not make sense to interpret the same word the same way in consecutive verses, especially since "resurrection" by definition refers to physical life?

The First Resurrection (20:4)

John equated two events, for he saw that people "**came to life**" (ἐζήσαν) at the "**first resurrection**"

Beale and other amillennialists see...

- "**resurrection**" (ἀνάστασις) in verse 4 as "spiritual"
- "**resurrection**" (ἀνάστασις) in verse 5 as "physical"

Seeing both as physical advocates two resurrections, which contradicts the amillennial system that teaches only **one general resurrection** after the millennium (viewed as the present age)

The First Resurrection (20:4)

Beale, 1004-5 seeks to defend this inconsistent rendering of "**resurrection**" (ἀνάστασις) in verses 4-5:

"Elsewhere in the NT ἀνάστασις and ζάω (or the cognate noun ζωή, 'life') and synonyms are used interchangeably of **both spiritual and physical resurrection** within the same immediate contexts."

- ^{NIV} Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was **raised from the dead** through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new **life**.

1. Is this "both spiritual and physical resurrection"?

No. Resurrection is still physical!

2. Are "resurrection" and "life" synonyms here?

No. But Christ's **physical resurrection** gives **spiritual life**.

The First Resurrection (20:4)

Beale, 1005 again seeks to defend this inconsistent rendering of "**resurrection**" (ἀνάστασις) in verses 4-5:

The "**first death** of believers... is physical and different in nature from the second death of unbelievers, which is spiritual."

- NIV Rev. 20:4b They **came to life** and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

1. Is "came to life" = "the first death of believers"?

No. Coming to life does not refer to dying!

2. Are "first death" and "second death" in time (20:14)?

Of course, as 1000 years separates them!

3. Are these "two deaths" therefore "different in nature"?

No. There *is* no "first death"—only a "first resurrection"!

Views on Revelation 20:1-6

| <u>Issue</u> | <u>Amil</u> | <u>Premil</u> |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Who | Hoekema | Mounce |
| Outline | Progressive | Futuristic |
| Rev 19-20 | Non-chron | Chronological |
| 1000 yrs | Indefinite | Literal |

Views on Revelation 20:1-6

| <u>Issue</u> | <u>Amil</u> | <u>Premil</u> |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Binder | Christ | Angel |
| Binding | Present | Millennium |
| Rule | Present | Future (13:15) |
| Place | Heaven | Earth (5:10) |

Views on Revelation 20:1-6

Issue

Amil

Premil

"Came to
life" (4a)

Transition
at death

Resurrection
(5b-6a)

"Came to
life" (5)

Resurrection Resurrection

Critique

Inconsistent

Consistent

Views on Revelation 20:1-6

Issue

Amil

Premil

**Resurrect
whom?**

**Believer
(4-5)**

**Unbeliever
(12-13)**

**Resurrect
when?**

**One general
resurrection**

**Several
resurrections**

**Persons
judged**

All people

**Unbelievers
only**

What time is it?

(Revelation 6-18 depicts which era?)



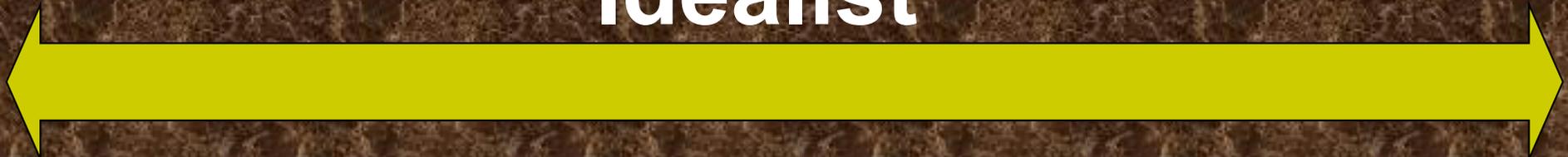
Preterist

Book
Written
AD 95

Historicist

Futurist

Idealist





The Recapitulation Approach

158a



Christ in the Midst of the Seven Lamp Stands (1–3)

The Vision of Heaven and the Seven Seals (4–7)

The Seven Trumpets (8–11)

The Persecuting Dragon (12–14)

The Seven Bowls (15–16)

The Fall of Babylon (17–19)

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