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Five Millennial Views of Revelation
Part 4 - Amillennialism

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Introduction

Just because of the nature of the type of literature, the book of Revelation is one of the most difficult books of the Bible to interpret. In fact, over the centuries, different people have interpreted it in quite different ways. And because very few know much about the book, it remains rather confusing for most people. To top it off, it is also not uncommon for individuals to hear teachings of more than one approach, and, not knowing how to distinguish between them, end up having a very mixed up or hybridized understanding.

This article is part four of a five part series designed to give an explanation of the five major millennial views:

- Historic Premillennialism (<https://www.marketfaith.org/2026/05/five-millennial-views-of-revelation-historic-premillennialism/>),
- Dispensational Premillennialism (<http://www.marketfaith.org/2026/05/five-millennial-views-of-revelation-dispensational-premillennialism/>),
- Postmillennialism (<https://www.marketfaith.org/2026/06/five-millennial-views-of-revelation-postmillennialism/>),
- Amillennialism, and
- Preterism.

It is our hope that this explanation will help you become able to clearly distinguish between the various views.

Definition and Explanation

The term “Amillennialism” (sometimes also referred to as Inaugurated Millennialism) is often misunderstood by

those who hold other millennial points of view. Amillennialists believe that the Kingdom of God was inaugurated at Christ’s resurrection (hence the term “Inaugurated Millennialism”). At that point, Christ gained victory over both Satan and the curse of sin. One of the phrases that is often associated with Amillennialism is “already but not yet.” The idea is that Christ, even now, reigns over the entirety of creation and is already victorious over Satan, but the consummation has not yet occurred.

Many people believe that Amillennialists simply ignore Revelation 20:1-6 where the concept of a Millennium is mentioned, thinking they have no belief whatsoever about a Millennium. The word “Amillennial” itself simply means “no millennium.” The first letter of the word (a) is actually the Greek word for “no” or “not.”

Rather than ignoring the Millennium, however, Amillennialists simply interpret it in a non-literal (symbolic) way as a reference to Christ’s eternal reign (which is already ongoing) based on the nature of apocalyptic literature. In fact, the term Amillennialism was never a self-designation. The word “Amillennial” was actually coined as a derogatory term by Dispensational Premillennialists as a label for those who denied a literal thousand-year reign of Christ on Earth. For that reason, Amillennialists often prefer the designation Inaugurated Millennialism.

Before the 20th century, what we now call Amillennialism was usually simply referred to as the “Augustinian View” or the standard “orthodox” position of the Latin Western Church. It was the default orthodoxy in Western Christianity for roughly 1,000 years from around 400 - 1500 A.D. This view was reaffirmed during the Medieval

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period and was later inherited by Roman Catholicism and much of Protestantism. While many of the earliest Christian writers held to a premillennialist view (what is now referred to as Historic Premillennialism), by the 3rd and 4th centuries, more church leaders began reading Revelation 20 symbolically and this view became dominant.

St. Augustine himself initially leaned toward a premillennial view, but later came to reject it in favor of the symbolic interpretation where the thousand years represented the present age in which Christ reigns spiritually from heaven through His church. In Augustine's view, the binding of Satan occurred at Christ's first coming.

Based on Augustine's influence, this view became dominant in Western Christianity up through the Middle Ages. As it was the accepted view through much of the Church's history, church leaders felt no need for a special label and it was simply considered the orthodox eschatology of the Church. It remained that way until Premillennialism and Postmillennialism became more widely debated beginning in the 19th century. It was at that point that the need for a distinct term emerged.

One other note: Jewish apocalyptic literature is a unique genre that is highly symbolic and born out of persecution. It was created for the purpose of hiding its real meaning from oppressors while revealing it to those who understood how to interpret it. If this book is genuinely an expression of Jewish apocalyptic literature, then the story written by John should be interpreted based on the literary principles governed by this genre. Those who advocate for this interpretative approach would promote the notion that later non-Jewish theologians, including many of the early church fathers, did not understand this kind of literature. As a result, they came to create another interpretive method (Historic Premillennialism) based on an entirely different hermeneutic approach.

The Place of Revelation in Amillennialism

The Book of Revelation holds a distinctive place in Amillennialism that differs significantly from Premillennialism and Postmillennialism. Amillennialists generally read Revelation as a symbolic drama based on the nature of apocalyptic literature, not as a chronological timeline. They see the book as a series of parallel visions (recapitulations) that cover the whole Church Age – from Christ's first coming to His second. For example, the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments (Revelation 6, 8, 9, 16) are not considered to be sequential, but are different perspectives on the same age-long struggle.

Thus, the Millennium as referred to in Revelation 20:1-6 is not thought of as a literal earthly reign, but as a symbolic description of the present Church Age between Christ's first and second comings.

Underlying Philosophy of Amillennialism

To comprehend Amillennialism, it is important to understand the genre of writing called Jewish apocalyptic literature. Apocalyptic literature is a genre of prophetic writing that emerged following the Jewish exile in Babylon. The word apocalypse is derived from the Greek word *apokalupsis* meaning "revelation." This is why the book of Revelation is also sometimes called "The Apocalypse." The literal meaning of the word refers to an unveiling or unfolding of things not previously known, and which could not be known apart from the unveiling.

This literary form is highly symbolic featuring various numbers, colors, animals, strange creatures, and certain items that represent concrete ideas. In some ways, it is like a code language. It was often used to hide the real meaning of a writer within a fantastical story that persecutors, in particular, would not be able to understand or even recognize as

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religious writing. Because of the persecution of the Church in its early days, it also became popular among some of the early Christians who had a Jewish background.

Most of the apocalyptic writings that exist have not been recognized as Scripture. These include such writings as the book of Enoch, the Secrets of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, and numerous others. In total, there are around 25-30 known apocalyptic texts.

In addition to the various apocalyptic writings, there are also some notable examples of this kind of writing in Scripture. The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are probably the most well known examples, but there are also several individual passages within other biblical writings such as parts of Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 17, 1 Timothy 4, and several others.

Those favoring an amillennial view interpret the Bible using what is called a redemptive-historical approach to biblical interpretation. This approach considers that Old Testament narratives are not merely moral examples for Christians to follow, but are also revelations of the coming Messiah. They are seen to be pointing forward in history to when Israel's Messiah would be revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Concerning Israel and the Church, rather than seeing the two as having separate identities, as in dispensationalism, the Church is understood to be the eschatological fulfillment of Israel. In other words, the Church is the new Israel. Thus, it does not replace Israel, rather, it is the continuation and fulfillment of true Israel in Christ. Salvation is the same for Jew and Gentile as there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.

Ethnic Israel is not discarded, but is re-defined Christologically around faith in the Messiah. Under the kingship of

Christ, it is believed that all Christians partake in God's eternal plan based on their personal relationship to Him by grace through faith in the King, Jesus Christ. In the current age, that truth is understood by faith, but at Christ's return will be known by sight.

As it relates to the Rapture, Amillennialists believe that immediately upon Christ's return, all the saints, both living and dead, will meet the Lord in the air and immediately proceed with Him to judge the nations. After that, they will follow Him to their eternal state.

Amillennial Storyline

As mentioned above, Amillennialists view the concept of the Millennium as symbolic of Christ's sovereign reign over all of God's creation – which includes the present era. They believe that at the conclusion of this present age, Christ will immediately return, judge the wicked, then usher the Church into its eternal state. The amillennial perspective emphasizes that the coming of the Kingdom of God is a two-part event.

Part one is understood to have dawned at Christ's first advent. In Matthew 3:2, John the Baptist proclaimed, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Christ won the final victory over death and Satan at the cross, He ascended to heaven to reign upon the throne of David forever along with the souls of departed believers (Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:30-31). With His resurrection, Satan was bound in the sense that he is unable to stop the spread of the gospel to the nations. (Matthew 12:29; Revelation 20:2-3) Thus, the Amillennialist understands final things as already accomplished, though currently seen by faith, not yet by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

The Church on Earth is currently, then, living through the Tribulation in the current age (Revelation 20:4). In this view, the Tribulation is the normal experience of the Church. However, near

the end there will be a final, heightened outbreak of evil and persecution (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 20:7-9). This is often associated with the rise of “the man of lawlessness” or Antichrist.

The second stage of the amillennial perspective is found in the final consummation when Christ returns. At that point, Christians will no longer see by faith alone, but by sight. When Christ comes, the dead will be raised (John 5:28-29) and the final judgment will take place (Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15). At the judgment, the righteous (all true believers) will enter into eternal life and the wicked will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14-15).

Finally, the present heavens and Earth will be destroyed and the new heavens and Earth will be created (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21-22). The redeemed will then dwell forever in God’s presence with no more death, mourning, crying, or pain (Revelation 21:4).

Amillennialists have no expectation of any kind of earthly glory for the Church. All of their hope is placed on heavenly glory.

Amillennial Timeline

1. Christ’s first coming occurred with His death, resurrection, and ascension. This inaugurated the Millennium and began the Tribulation. Satan was bound.
2. The Present Age - This represents the symbolic thousand-year Millennium where Christ reigns spiritually from heaven and the Church lives in an ongoing tribulation. Believers who die during this period reign with Christ in heaven.
3. Intensification at the End - Before Christ returns, Satan will be released for a little while and there will be a final outbreak of evil, persecution, and deception under the leadership of the Antichrist.
4. Christ’s Second Coming - Christ will return visibly in glory and there will be a general resurrection of all people.
5. Last judgment - All people will be judged. The wicked will be cast into the Lake of Fire and the righteous will inherit the new heavens and new earth to reign eternally with Christ.

Conclusion

We will next, in part 5, deal with Preterism. Once again, it is my hope that this deep dive into the various interpretive approaches to understanding the book of Revelation will be a great help in your personal understanding of Scripture and of a biblical worldview.

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