

Will Jesus Reign Upon the Earth for 1,000 Years?

Premillennialists believe that Christ will some day return to this earth, establish an earthly kingdom, and rule here a thousand years. According to this theory, this will take place before the final resurrection and judgment.

The word “millennium” is not in the Bible, and neither is the concept of premillennialism found in the Scriptures. “Millennium” means “a thousand years,” and with the prefix “pre” means “before the thousand years.” Premillennialists believe Christ will come to set up His kingdom on this earth, and rule over it for one thousands years. One of the most dangerous doctrines contained in the premillennial theory is that a “second chance” will be given many of the unjust at their resurrection. The main proof text used by premillennialists is Revelation 20:4. *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”*

Many things taught in the book of Revelation were “signified” unto John

(Revelation 1:1). To *signify* something is to teach by signs, symbols and figures of speech. Note that this passage says nothing at all about a bodily resurrection of the saints. Neither does it say when the thousand year reign will take place, nor where. Thus, the theory that Christ will return to earth with these saints, and establish a literal reign here for a thousand years, is not even hinted at in the passage. Therefore, it is perverted by those who attempt to use it as proof of their theory.

Shall we take all John wrote as literal? Read verse three and tell us if the bottomless pit really had no bottom to it. Note also the verbs in verse four: *“I saw,” “judgment had been given,” “had been beheaded,” “they lived, and reigned.”* Premillennialists often insist upon a literal application of this passage, but in their arguments they change these past tense verbs into future tense, and say **shall live and shall reign**. They also insist the reigning **shall be** here upon earth, but the passage says not one word as to where the reigning was to be done. If we take the passage in its literal language, the reigning has already taken place, for the verbs used are past tense. Our passage says the *“souls of them that had been beheaded”* lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, but the premillennialists also include many who will not have died at Christ’s second coming.

Note also that this passage does not say how long Christ will reign or where. To say that “Susie lived and worked with Elmer on the farm twenty-five years” is not to say how long Elmer lived and worked on the farm. So the souls of those *“that had been beheaded”* lived and reigned with Christ, gives no hint

as to how long Christ’s reign is. Also, this reign included only a certain class of saints—those beheaded, or martyrs—none else.

Therefore, we can plainly see from the foregoing that Revelation 20 does not contain the slightest hint that Christ will ever come to earth to establish a literal kingdom. Neither does this passage, nor any other, teach there will be a “second chance” for salvation extended to those who died unsaved.

None of the premillennialists I know of will affirm that the beast of Revelation 20:4 is a literal beast. Neither can they show the thousand years means a literal reign on earth.

In Revelation 20 nothing is said about the bodies of the beheaded souls being raised. “Souls” can live without their bodies being raised, for the soul does not depend upon the body for its continued existence (Matthew 10:28). Also, there are figurative resurrections in the Bible. Bringing the house of Israel out of captivity is pictured as bringing them out of their graves (Ezekiel 37:1-15). In a figurative sense, John the Baptist was called Elijah; not Elijah literally raised from the dead, but John in the spirit and power of Elijah. *The “thousand years” refers to a period of time when faithful preachers of the Gospel would boldly defy false religions.*

Nobody can know that the *“thousand years”* mentioned is a *literal* thousand years. It may possibly signify a long

period of time. When a preacher speculates with figurative language, making it literal, and tries to interpret prophecy before it is ever fulfilled and makes positive statements concerning such, you may be assured he does not know what he is talking about.

We have seen that premillennialists, who teach Christ will come to earth and establish His kingdom with a literal reign, use Revelation 20 as proof. We have shown that this passage is perverted to teach such by the following:

1. The book of Revelation is written largely in signs and symbols, to which literal meanings cannot be attached;
2. The passage does not mention a bodily resurrection of the saints;
3. It does not say when or where the thousand year reign would take place;
4. It does not suggest the idea Christ will return to earth with saints that sleep and establish a literal, earthly reign;
5. If we are going to take the passage literally, then the verbs are in the past tense, indicating the reign has already taken place, and no future reign on earth is indicated;
6. This passage mentions only those who have suffered martyrdom, but premillennialists also include those living when Christ comes;
7. Though it says **souls** reigned a thousand years, it does not say where,

neither does it say how long Christ reigned;

8. Only those “*beheaded for the testimony of Jesus*” were included, thus the unjust are excluded, and there is no promise of a “second chance;”

9. No premillennialist will say that the “beast” and his “image” are to be taken literally. How can one demand a literal application of a “thousand years?”

10. The passage does not say Christ would come back to earth **before** or even **at the beginning** of this reign. It does not say that either Christ or the “souls” were on earth at the time of the reign.

Any honest student of the Bible must conclude that neither Revelation 20, nor any other passage for that matter, teaches that Christ will literally reign on this earth a thousand years.



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