

# The Millennium and the end of sin



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What will happen  
after the final  
judgment?



# The Biblical Foundation

# Belief #27 - The Millennium

- ✦ Important verses that describe the Millennium
- ✦ Rev 20:1-15
- ✦ 1 Cor 6:2-3
- ✦ Mal 4:1-3
- ✦ Jer 4:23-28



# General Summary

- ✦ When will it happen?
- ✦ Where will the church be during this time?
- ✦ What will be happening on earth?
- ✦ What will be happening in heaven?
- ✦ What will happen to the unsaved?
- ✦ How will it end?

# General Summary

- ✦ It will begin at the coming of Christ and the first Resurrection - Rev 19
- ✦ The righteous will go to be with Christ in heaven and not on earth in the new Jerusalem (Post-Millennium) - Rev 20:4-6 ; 1 Tess 4:17 ; John 14:2-3
- ✦ No one will be alive on earth except the dragon (Azazel) - Lev 16:21-22 / Rev 19:21 / Jer 4:23-25 (Messy and empty)
- ✦ In heaven the saved will review the judgment of the wicked - 1 Cor 6:2-3 ; Rev 20:4
- ✦ The wicked will resurrect at the end of the millennium to be judged and punished definitively - John 5:29 ; Rev 20:5,12 ; Luk 13:28
- ✦ Every knee will bow and confess that God is King and righteous Judge - Fil 2:10-11 ; Isa 45:22-25

# Details of the judgment - Rev 20:4,6

- ★ This is a particular Adventist doctrine since we understand the phases of the trial: Investigative, Confirmative, Executive
- ★ The Confirming judgment occurs during the millennium only to affirm God's justice in leaving behind those who only appeared to be pious and saving those who seemed to reject the gospel.
- ★ The confirming judgment is for the benefit of the saved since in the investigative phase God's justice was made clear to the rest of the universe and in the executive, the same will be done for the lost.
- ★ A key detail in these judgments is that the blame will be placed on Satan although the punishment for the sin of the righteous was already carried by Christ ( More details in The Sanctuary)

# Difficult terms

- ★ The executive judgment offers an interesting dilemma for Adventism since it makes repetitive references to the lake of fire and speaks of "eternal" torment (Mat 3:12; Rev 20:10)
- ★ It is necessary to identify both terms in their prophetic-apocalyptic context and also see other uses given in the rest of the Bible
- ★ KEY: This is one of the principles to use with all other difficult texts



# Fire and eternal torment

- When studying the occurrences of *Aionios* (forever, eternal) in the general biblical context we find that it does not explicitly refer to an indefinite time but rather to a variable condition depending on what or who it describes.
- When referring to the **divine** the term ETERNAL is used to describe his immortal and everlasting attributes- Rom 16:26; Heb 9:14
- When referring to a **place, city, or town**, the "eternal" destruction has an endpoint when the object of the trial is completely consumed (Jer 17:27, Judas 7; Isaiah 34:9-10)
- When referring to a **human** it is understood that it is in perpetuity until the end of the life of the individual (Exo 21:6; 1 Sam 1:22; Jonah 2:6; Phile 16)
- These occurrences of *Aionios* and its variations throughout the Bible make it clear that Revelations refers to the eternal destruction of sinners and sin, not to perpetual suffering, even though evangelical translators try to imply that in their translations/interpretations of the Greek text.

# Lake of fire

- ★ When analyzing this phrase in the general biblical context it clearly refers only to the end times and not to a hidden place somewhere in the universe where sinners burn after their death. Sinners would not have to be thrown into the lake of fire at the time of judgment if they were already there.
- ★ It is also noted that it is a place where punishment for the wicked is physically executed, unlike the "spiritual" interpretations of other denominations that have "hells" for souls and not bodies.
- ★ Finally, it is possible (not necessary) to identify two different lakes, Rev 19 and 20. This distinction was made by James White (RH 21/1/1862). Because all sinners alive at the second coming will die, one could interpret that they will be killed by divine fire and after the millennium and their resurrection for condemnation they will be killed again with fire, but this second time they will be eternally dead.

# Lake of fire

- ✦ One last detail of this lake of fire is the specially mentioned participants: Satan, death, Hades, the false prophet, and the beast
- ✦ The Beast (scarlet Babylon - papal Rome) and the false prophet (apostate Protestantism) in the form of their followers will be thrown first into the lake of fire before the millennium. These will die leaving the devil totally alone for “one thousand years” on earth with no one to tempt.
- ✦ After the millennium, the leader of the rebellion will gather all the people who rejected God only to be destroyed by the divine fire, some for the second time.
- ✦ Finally, death and Hades or the grave (in many Protestant Bibles translated as hell) will also be thrown into the lake of fire. These last two are neither people nor geographical places implying that this "lake of fire" is not only a place of physical destruction but is the maximum manifestation of divine punishment for everything related to sin.

# What does it mean to me

- ✦ Does it make a difference?
- ✦ How meaningful is it to my faith?
- ✦ What am I doing to prepare for this event?

# Deceptions and confusion

# IT WILL BE GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH

- ❖ One of God's objectives in his plan of salvation is to restore the world to the way he created back in Eden. This will be accomplished when Christ returns and establishes his kingdom on earth. Once the antichrist is defeated, we christians will fulfill the prophecies of the OT Israel and bring all the world to the faith in Christ at the new Jerusalem that Revelation predicts
- ❖ ANSWER: 2 Peter 3:12-13 / 1 Cor 2:9 (More answers in the Millennium)



# A millennial kingdom

- This millennial kingdom shows Christ as an earthly king who from Jerusalem reigns over the whole world with an iron rod after the "rapture" and during the millennium. The timeline is debated among the evangelicals as they can't agree on when the kingdom begins, how long it lasts, and who exactly participates.
- This interpretation is natural for those who think that all the conditional promises given to Israel must be fulfilled. By not understanding that spiritual Israel, the true church, is the recipient of the new covenant in Christ that original Israel rejected they are forced to include in the millennium a supreme Israelite kingdom.
- Answer: Rev 7:9-17; 19:20-21; 20:5 / Jer 4:23-28 / Gal 3:26-29 / Rom 9:3-8 (More details in The Church)

# Proof that hell is a real place in the Bible

- ★ As we have already seen, it is possible to misinterpret the mentions of the lake of fire and eternal torment with the popular idea of hell, but there are details even within these same passages that dispel this notion of a God who will perpetuate sin for all eternity.
- ★ To understand these details it is vital to understand the terms used in the Bible to refer to this final judgment.



# This is proof that hell is a real place.

- ✦ *Hades* (Greek) and *Sheol* (Hebrew) are the same words and refer in almost all their appearances in the OT and NT to the grave, not hell or punishment (Luk 10:15 / Isa 14:13-15) The only exception is Luke 16:23 but that passage is a parable and by nature, the details of it are merely symbolic (Parable of the talking trees Judges 9:8-15).
- ✦ Unfortunately, there was a translation error made by Jerome when translating the Bible into Latin. He understood that *Sheol* meant grave but being influenced by the Greek philosophers and their vision of the afterlife he used the term *Infernos* (lower world, underground, the grave) instead of *Sepulchrum*. Eventually, *Infernos* became associated with eternal torment after death. Of course that is not the original meaning and it causes confusion to those who read with a bias.

- ★ *Abaddon* (Hebrew) - It's very close to *Sheol* in the Hebrew mind because it was often used together to describe ruin or destruction both as a condition and place.
- ★ *Tehom* (Hebrew) and *Abussos or Bathos* (Greek) - The depth where the dead inhabit supposedly until the resurrection. Also used to refer to everything deep such as groundwater and even the abode of the demons and the place of confinement of Satan during the millennium. Interestingly, it is the same term used for abyss in Genesis 1:2
- ★ *Gehenna* (Greek) and *Ge Hinnom* (Hebrew) - A gorge near Jerusalem where Moloch was worshipped during the OT. This practice was forbidden by Josiah and the place became associated with punishment for the wicked (Jer 7:32,33). During Jesus' ministry, it was a landfill for garbage burning. This is the word Christ used in the Sermon on the Mount and in other warnings of divine punishment. It is also mistranslated as "hell" when it really refers to the final destruction of the wicked with fire in the last days and as we have already seen is not eternal in duration but in finiteness.

- ★ *Tartarus* (Greek) - From Greek mythology, it was used by the apostles with their Gentile audience since its equivalent (*Gehenna*) meant nothing to nonjews. The biblical concept of the state of the dead has nothing to do with the Greek idea of the abode of the dead guarded by Hades or Pluto, the Greek and Roman deities of the underworld.
- ★ All these terms have been erroneously translated in numerous passages as “hell” giving wrong ideas about the fate of the dead. A simple study of these terms in their original language clarifies that in no way do they imply a place of eternal punishment or the place where the evil dead go.
- ★ That's why death and Hades can be thrown into the lake of fire. In reality, neither of these two things is “hell” but rather terms that describe the state of the dead and therefore are related to sin and must be destroyed.
- ★ In addition, the lake of fire is not a place of torment but the second death as Revelations 20:14 clearly says. When sin is destroyed, everything related to it will also be destroyed and become a thing of the past.
- ★ Answer: Revelations 20:14 / 21:4 (See more in Death and the Resurrection)

# The torment will be eternal.

- ✦ This popular idea was developed in the third century by Catholic theologians such as Origen. At first, it was invoked to inspire holiness, but eventually, it was used as a method of controlling Catholic believers.
- ✦ As we have already seen a correct understanding of the term *Aionios* debunks any attempt to support an eternal punishment of the wicked
- ✦ Answer: Lk 12:47,48; Rev 21:4



# Torment won't be physical but emotional or spiritual

- ✦ This is an idea of Gnostic origin and proposes that salvation is spiritual and outside the carnal body; therefore, perdition will also be spiritual.
- ✦ Catholics and most Protestants in supporting that souls go to heaven after death jointly accept that souls suffer in hell, not bodies. It is incoherent that in the final judgment hell suddenly becomes for physical bodies.
- ✦ Answers: Mal 4:1 ; Sal 92:7 (More answers in Death and the Resurrection)



# The millennium will be a second chance for humanity

- ★ Origen and other Catholic and Protestant theologians who believe in justification by suffering, propose that after a certain time of suffering, whether in "hell", purgatory, or tribulation, unbelievers will also be saved.
- ★ As seen previously God “can’t” destroy his creation so he saves everyone.
- ★ Answers: Mal 4:1 ; Sal 92:7 ; 2 Tess 1:6-10 ; Rev 21:8



# It will be 1000 literal or symbolic years.

- ★ This is an extension of the confusion surrounding the fulfillment of OT prophecy. It is easy to fall into this confusion if we don't properly interpret the different styles of prophecy and read passages without considering the context. Confusion surrounding the year-per-day principle for apocalyptic prophecy also factors into the interpretations.
- ★ **PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION** - Time in the **classical** prophecy of OT applies literally and locally unless explicitly stated otherwise (Ezeq 4 - a prophecy full of symbolism). Time in **apocalyptic** prophecy is understood as symbolic and is applied globally (2300 years).
- ★ Answers: Luk 13:32-33 ; Num 14:34, Dan 9:24-27

# Two scales: Second coming and fulfillment

- While these labels are hardly precise they help us to group their adherents into easier-to-breakdown profiles
- The Millennial scales shed light on the person's vision of the second coming, the role of the church, and the reality of the great controversy
- The Fulfillment scale sheds significant light on the person's understanding of Revelation, the resurrection and glorification of the saved, and their overall approach to biblical interpretation of prophetic text, whether literal or generally symbolic.
- These scales can be charted into a confusing graph but our focus needs to be on the mentality of the believer when it comes to Revelation and eschatology rather than the particulars of their views.

# Postmillennialism

- ✦ Roman Catholics created this view by saying that the week cut off in Daniel is after the second coming and not till then will the man of sin show itself absolving them of being the beast. This means not taking the millennium literally.
- ✦ It also argues that a golden age began with the resurrection of Jesus and will end when the church had done its job of evangelizing everyone. It was a popular view until the world wars. Social gospel is trying to bring it back but it doesn't account for NT teachings about the end times being filled with trouble.
- ✦ This idea of a new age helps the argument of Sunday since we are in a different time from that of Creation and the fall.

# Postmillennialism - Profile

- ★ This person is not your usual Christian since this view is not mainstream. They are probably deeply rooted in this belief and are ready to debate you on it since it is fundamental to their theology. It defines their much less militant Christianity and places the second coming in a very distant future.
- ★ Usually orthodox, rarely evangelical but of the more theologically sound kind. Their biggest arguments are the lack of mentions of the millennium in other parts of the Bible and the confusion caused by the separation of the second coming and the final judgment.
- ★ This view ignores the great controversy regarding it as mostly completed at the Cross.

# Amillennialism

- Agustin began it around the fourth century and has become the Catholic Church's position. It is the claim that the millennium is the whole church age. According to this view, Satan was “tied” by Christ's victory on the cross, and the first resurrection is the new birth of Christians into the church. The immortal souls of the saved dead are currently reigning with Christ in heaven until his return.
- This is popular today because it eliminates judgment cycles and the different manifestations of Christ's return. It is a strong alternative because of the general premillennialists stance of an earthly millennium which is not easily interpreted from Revelation.

# Amillennialism - Profile

- This is very similar to postmillennialism in most aspects, except that it accounts for the degeneration of human society. Much like its close relative, it doesn't emphasize the second coming or the glorious reign of Christ as it is allegedly already taking place for the righteous dead.
- The role of the church is slightly more important but in the realm of fighting the devil's deception of the individuals as opposed to advancing the gospel to hasten Christ's return.
- This is usually a searching Christian who, confused by Revelation and its symbolism, seeks to simplify the events of the second coming. The easiest way to approach them is by highlighting the flaws of other views and exploring together the unsolved issue of satan's incomplete bounding.

# Premillennialism

- Up until Agustin the Christian church was premillennialist. Because this view interprets Rev 19,20 and 21 sequentially it is the easiest interpretation without the obfuscation of a necessary fulfillment of OT conditional prophecies or the rapture.
- While most theological circles differentiate between historical and dispensational pre-mill this classification is a crossover of the other scale and changes little about the order of the Second coming and the final judgment.
- This is the position held by the SDA church and it is the most widely regarded in Christianity.

# Premillennialism - Profile

- The more literalist approach of this person is a double-edged sword since it also limits their understanding of the symbolism in other parts of Revelation and the conditionality of OT prophecies.
- Their emphasis is rightly placed on the second coming as the beginning of the exaltation of the church and therefore it theoretically invigorates the church to work to prepare for the second coming. However many adherents fail to see it as the beginning of the end for the presence of sin as universalist views still creep into even this view.
- Because it is the most popular view it contains a wide range of hues, particularly with the addition of aspects like the immortality of the soul and the Jewish nation

# Preterist

- ★ This view interprets Revelation events in the past like AD 70. It generally aligns with Postmill and Amill camps since past Apocalyptic events would fit a view where the millennium began thousands of years ago.
- ★ This causes a sidelining of Revelation and an interpretation of such text as symbolic descriptions of literal events but in the past. Reason states that such interpretations would also lead to a minimizing of the promise of resurrection since it would have been in the past but this is a spot where incoherence within this view surfaces.

# Historicist

- ✦ In this view, Revelation events are happening throughout history, with some already passed and some yet to come. In between there's much speculation trying to establish which events already occurred or not.
- ✦ Also understanding Revelation as a symbolic description of literal events leads to a vivid discussion on which historical events are the fulfillment of the apocalyptic narrative.
- ✦ One advantage of this interpretation of apocalyptic prophecies is it places all of human history including the resurrection within the timeline of God's master plan.

# Futurists

- ✦ This very popular interpretation places all or most Revelation events in the future. Understanding prophecy to be literal and symbolic descriptions of literal future events allows nearly any speculation to “fit” since there’s no standard to measure propositions against. This is where ideas like the rapture and tribulation thrive
- ✦ Naturally, a perspective like this shrouds Revelation in irrelevance to the current Christian struggle and makes promises of resurrection a far-off hope rather than an imminent truth. Mysticism and misunderstanding of bible prophecy are very close to adherents to this view.

# Idealist

- ★ Of all the interpretations this is the least real because it interprets Revelation events as symbolic descriptions of spiritual truths not located in any particular time. This is just shy of completely disregarding Revelation as prophecy and labeling Christian allegories like *Pilgrim's Progress* or the *Chronicles of Narnia*
- ★ Of course, it is incredibly dangerous to label prophecy as an allegory since it altogether removes proof of God's omniscience and predestination. These key beliefs about God along with His promise of resurrection have to be found elsewhere in the Scripture and while that is possible it leaves Revelation with little to no significance for the Bible.

*“I believe it will all pan out eventually.”*

Pan-ist



Will you believe, teach, and defend the truths of the Millennium and the destruction of sin?