

What does Rev 20:1-4 mean?

Then I saw an angel ... He laid hold of the dragon ... *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while ... Then / *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God ... And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

There are four explanations of this passage:

1. *Historic Premillennialism*: Christ returns to usher in a millennial reign on Earth after a general apostasy.
2. *Dispensational Premillennialism*: Christ returns to usher in a Jewish millennial reign on Earth after a previous return, a secret rapture and a great tribulation. [See *Dispensationalism* card.]
3. *Amillennialism*: there is no millennium; it is symbolic of the Gospel age.
4. *Postmillennialism*: A) Christ returns after a 1000-year, golden, church age. B) Christ returns after a 1000-year, golden, church age where the Law of Moses rules the world (*Theonomy* or *Reconstructionism*). C) Christ returns after a 1000-year, golden, church age where apostles and prophets rule the world after a global revival (*Charismatic Dominionism*).

Problems with these

- An important doctrine like the millennium requires further teaching by the apostles; but they never mention it once.
- How can earthly sinners survive under the fiery glory of the exalted Christ?
- Revelation is a book of symbols. Numbers have symbolic value.
- Postmillennialism can be ruled out since Christ and the apostles repeatedly warned that the end would be a time of great deceit and apostasy.
- Dispensationalism can be ruled out for the reasons given elsewhere.

Some points to note in the text

- The devil was bound by Christ at the cross, not in the future.
- This binding was to prevent him deceiving the nations so that they destroyed the church. It enabled the Gospel to be proclaimed.
- Those who reigned with Christ in this 1000 years were dead saints in the glory, not living saints on the earth.

The only sound interpretation is that given by Amillennialism. The millennium is the period from the cross to the return of Christ, when the Gospel is preached to all nations.

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