

Three Views of the Millennium:

The Three Major Schools of Christian Eschatology

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Eschatology: The branch of theology that is concerned with the study of the “last things.”

Millennium: The 1,000 year period referred to in Revelation 20:1-10, also known as the Messianic Kingdom, or the Reign of Christ.

Second Coming: The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to earth.

SPECIAL NOTE: Do not confuse the rapture question with the millennium question. The rapture question concerns a debate within premillennialism over the relationship between the timing of the rapture and a seven-year tribulation.

The Three Major Views of the Millennium

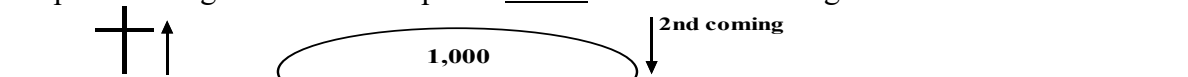
I. PRE-MIL (Premillennialism) The Lord will return before the millennium begins. The second coming will be followed by a 1,000 year period of peace and righteousness.



II. A-MIL (Amillennialism, or Present-Day Millennialism) - The “millennium” is the Messianic Kingdom present from the time of Christ’s ascension to the time of his second coming. Hence, the period spoken of in Revelation 20 is the Kingdom of God during the church age. Jesus warned that the Messianic Kingdom could be difficult to perceive: Ref. Matthew 13:10-16.



III. POST-MIL (Postmillennialism) - The Lord will return after the millennium. The preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit will bring about a long period of righteousness and peace before the second coming of Christ.



Crucial Questions:

What did Jesus and John the Baptist mean when they said that the Kingdom was “at hand”?
What is the nature of the Kingdom of God during the era of the Church?

See the next page for explicit answers from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to these crucial questions.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church *and* The Millennium

CCC 541 “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe in the gospel.’” “To carry out the will of the Father Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth.” Now the Father’s will is “to raise up men to share in his own divine life.” He does this by gathering men around his Son Jesus Christ. This gathering is the Church, “on earth the seed and beginning of that kingdom.” [See sections 542 to 560 for additional descriptions of Kingdom activity during the Church age.]

CCC 664 Being seated at the Father’s right hand signifies the inauguration of the Messiah’s kingdom, the fulfillment of the prophet Daniel’s vision concerning the Son of man: “To him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14). After this event the apostles became witnesses of the “kingdom [that] will have no end” (Nicene Creed).

Daniel 7:13–14 I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. **14** And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

[The Ascension was inauguration of the Kingdom age. The Second Coming is the consummation of the Kingdom.]

CCC 668 Christ’s Ascension into heaven signifies his participation, in his humanity, in God’s power and authority. Jesus Christ is Lord: he possesses all power in heaven and on earth. He is “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion,” for the Father “has put all things under his feet.” Christ is Lord of the cosmos and of history.

CCC 669 As Lord, Christ is also head of the Church, which is his Body ... “The kingdom of Christ [is] already present in mystery,” “on earth, the seed and the beginning of the kingdom.”

CCC 671 Though already present in his Church, Christ’s reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled “with power and great glory” by the king’s return to earth.

CCC 865 The Church is ultimately *one, holy, catholic, and apostolic* in her deepest and ultimate identity, because it is in her that “the Kingdom of heaven,” the “Reign of God,” already exists and will be fulfilled at the end of time. The kingdom has come in the person of Christ and grows mysteriously in the hearts of those incorporated into him, until its full eschatological manifestation.

This handout accompanies Episode 518 of *Luke 21: Biblical Prophecy Explained*.

**Additional resources, including *The First & Second Resurrections*
and *The Little Season*, are available at Luke21.com.**