

Amillennialism: Biblical Teaching? A Thousand Years Exegesis

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Amillennialism

Advocates of this millennial view maintain that no millennium is to be looked for except that which they claim to be is “in progress” now in the gospel age, the age of the Spirit or the age of grace.

The amillennialists interpretation “spiritualizes” or gives a mystical meaning to the prophecies concerning the vast Kingdom promises of the Old Testament. They generally contend that Zion is constructed not to mean Zion but to refer to the Christian Church. They make no differentiation between Israel and the church, which is a correct understanding, but misapply this meaning. The amillennialists claim John the Baptists prophecy of the baptism of the Spirit and Jesus’ reference to this in Acts 1:5 means the Church is the fulfillment of “all” the prophecies of the Kingdom.

Two key teaching for amillennial theology is the teaching that the thousand year period is not a literal thousand year reign but an undefined or indeterminate period of time and that Satan is already bound based upon that teaching.

The Satan is bound theory hardly seems worthy to warrant challenge. All one needs to do is open their eyes, look around and smell the coffee. Is this society the best Jesus can do?

Let’s focus on their exegetical claim that the Millennium is not to be understood as a literal 1,000 year period of time.

The Millennium

The term millennium is a combined Latin word, “mille” meaning thousand and “annum” meaning year. The word millennium only appears in the Scofield translation of the bible. In other translations the Greek is rendered as a thousand years and refers to the reign of Christ upon the earth. The various views postulated are based upon when that period begins in relation to the return of Christ.

In Christianity, the millennial views include Post-Millennialism, Christ returns after the 1,000 year reign ...which is all but dead due to history; Pre-Millennialism, the return of Christ begins the thousand year reign of Christ; and A-Millennialism, there is no literal reign, the kingdom is now.

Exegesis

Several Greek words have been translated “thousand” in the New Testament. (Appendix A) We’ll examine all of these words and also the key words use in Revelation when referring to a “thousand year reign” to determine whether this is a literal period of time or a figurative

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period of time. A central concept for amillennialism is this is an undetermined period of time.

Let's begin with an examination of the verses in Revelation 20, then see how these words are used elsewhere in scripture.

Revelation 20:2-8 (emphasis mine)

- 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;
- 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until **the thousand** years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.
- 4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, **and** those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; **and** they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.
- 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until **the thousand** years were completed. This is the first resurrection.
- 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign **with Him for a thousand** years.
- 7 When **the thousand** years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,
- 8 and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.

The Binding of Satan

We see one of the characteristics of this period of time is that Satan is “bound” meaning he cannot deceive anyone during this period of time. This is not some figurative binding because we see in verse 7 that he is released. The binding in verse 2 is referring to the second coming of Jesus our Messiah to defeat Satan at the battle of Armageddon, and the release of Satan (verse 8) brings about the war of Gog and Magog. This thousand year period begins and ends with war.

For Amillennialism to be valid, they would need to demonstrate any period of time that begins and ends with war where the people of the earth were not deceived “during” that period of time. There is no time period in human history we can look to where the peoples of the earth are NOT under the sway and deceiving power of Satan that begins and ends with war. Their position that the Calvary event is the period of time that binds Satan is not scripturally valid for the peoples of the earth are still being deceived by Satan. If we were to postulate that all that the myriad of cults and world religions were all indeed part of the body of Christ (which I do not believe are) we would be forced at a minimum to conclude that

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Satan has power to deceive the Church. Even if we “excluded” the those that embrace heresy, we are still left with a myriad of conflicting denominational teaching. This thinking would still force one to conclude Satan is deceiving the body of Christ - His Church. This would serve to render Satan more powerful than God the Holy Spirit which is absolutely false.

If we were to conclude that the “period of time” expressed as a “thousand years” is not a literal time period of 1,000 years, and it began when Christ crushed the head of Satan by His resurrection to life, then God’s Word could not be looked upon as infallible. There is just no way to reconcile the texts with the Amillemlial position.

A Thousand Years

The Greek translated a thousand years in Revelation 20, verses 2-8 is *ci l ioi chilioi* (*khil'-ee-oy*) which also appears in 2 Peter 3:8 and Revelation 11:3, 12:6.

2 Peter 3:8

But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like **a thousand <5507chilio>** years, **and a thousand <5507 chilioi>** years like one day.

Revelation 11:3

"And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **twelve hundred <5507 chilioi>** and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

Revelation 12:6

Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she **had* a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished **for one thousand <5507 chilioi>** two hundred and sixty days.

It is difficult to state this is referring to an unknown period of time when the word *chilioi* is used in Revelation to calculate a specific period of time, 1,260.

It is also important to note that when the the root *chilioi* is also used to determind specific numbers *ci l iav chillas* (*khil-ee-as'*); 5,000 in Acts 4:4, 10,000 and 20,000 in Luke 14:31; 23,000 in 1 Corinthians 10:8; and in counting the number of each of the tribes in Revelation 7:4-8 as it does in the remainder of it's uses with the sole exception being Revelation 5:11.

Revelation 5:11

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads **<3461 murias>** of myriads **<3461 murias>**, and thousands **<5505 chillas>** of thousands **<5505 chillas>**,

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We see the use of the term thousand in this scripture is in context of multiplying a thousand by a thousand to express a very large number. This is done much in the same way that Jesus uses the expression of 70 times seven to express a very large unknown amount. I don't think anybody would take the position that Jesus meant to issue a quota of 490 as the number of times one should forgive their brother. The word *myrias* (moo-ree'-as) that has been translated as myriad is used to further express the same thought in Revelation 5:11 and when combined with the expression of thousands of thousands the thought is meant to represent a multitudinous number too large to count.

The other Greek words in the New Testament that use the root *chilioi* to represent a "specific" number are: *dischilioi* (dis-khil'-ee-oy) 2,000; *tetrakischilioi* (tet-rak-is-khil'-ee-oy) 4,000; *pentakischilioi* (pen-tak-is-khil'-ee-oy) 5,000; and *heptakischilioi* (hep-tak-is-khil'-ee-oy) 7,000.

Scriptures, and the Greek language simply do not support the teaching that the word *chilioi* may be used to express an unknown or uncertain period of time or number. Context and exegesis both support the understanding of the word *chilioi* to mean 1,000.

A Period of Time Still In The Future

*Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, **and** those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

Souls of those who had been beheaded ...

Those saints who suffered martyrdom for Jesus and the Word of God. This represents all who died for God throughout the ages.

Those who had not worshipped the beast or his image ...

Those who were not deceived by nor worshipped the beast is referring to a time yet to come. This prophesy is yet to be fulfilled ... it represents a time yet in the future. This verse is talking about the workings of the anti-christ and the beasts of Revelation.

They came and reigned with Christ a thousand years ...

This refers to the resurrection of the believers ... the first resurrection. This is the blessed hope and the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed

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This is the Great White Throne Judgement at the end of the millennium when Jesus puts down the Gog and Magog war and raises the remaining dead for final judgement.

Appendix A

Greek Word Definitions - Thousand

5507 *cil ioi chilioi khil'-ee-oy*

plural of uncertain affinity; TDNT-9:466,1316; adj; a prim. word; *a thousand*:—
NAS-one thousand (1), thousand (8), twelve hundred* (1).
AV-thousand 11; 11
1) a thousand

5505 *cil iav chalias khil-ee-as'*

from 5507; TDNT-9:466,1316; n f; *one thousand*:—
NAS-thousand (20), thousands (2).
AV-thousand 23; 23
1) a thousand, the number one thousand

4000 *pentakiscil ioi pentakischilioi pen-tak-is-khil'-ee-oy*

a card. num. from 3999 and 5507; adj; *five thousand*:—
NAS-five (1), five thousand (6).
AV-five thousand 6; 6
1) five thousand

5070 *tetrakiscil ioi tetrakischilioi tet-rak-is-khil'-ee-oy*

from the multiplicative adverb of 5064 and 5507; ; adj; *four thousand*:—
NAS-four thousand (5).
AV-four thousand 5; 5
1) four thousand

3461 *huriav murias moo-ree'-as*

from 3463; n f; *ten thousand, a myriad*:—
NAS-fifty* (1), many thousands (2), myriads (3), thousand (1), thousands (1), two hundred million* (1).
AV-ten thousand times ten thousand 2, two hundred thousand thousand + 1417 2, innumerable multitude 1, ten thousand 1, innumerable company 1, fifty thousand + 3902 1, thousands 1; 9
1) ten thousand
2) an innumerable multitude, an unlimited number
3) innumerable hosts

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3463 **murioi murioi moo'-ree-oi**

plural of an apparently primary word (properly, meaning very many); adj; *countless*, pl. *ten thousand*:—

NAS-countless (1), ten thousand (2). AV-ten thousand 3; 3

1) innumerable, countless 2) ten thousand

1367 **discil ioi dischilioi dis-khil'-ee-oy**

from 1364 and 5507; adj; *two thousand*:—

NAS-two thousand (1).

AV-two thousand 1; 1

1) two thousand

2035 **eptakiscil ioi heptakischilioi hep-tak-is-khil'-ee-oy**

from 2034 and 5507; TDNT-2:627,249; n ; *seven thousand*:—

NAS-seven thousand (1).

AV-seven thousand 1; 1

1) seven thousand

SCRIPTURES

5507 **chilioi khil'-ee-oy**

2 Peter 3:8

But do not let this one *fact* escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like **a thousand <5507 chilio>** years, **and a thousand <5507 chilioi>** years like one day.

Revelation 11:3

"And I will grant *authority* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **twelve hundred <5507 chilioi>** and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

Revelation 12:6

Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she **had* a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished **for one thousand <5507 chilioi>** two hundred and sixty days.

Revelation 20:2-7

- 2 And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound **him for a thousand <5507 chilioi>** years;
- 3 and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until **the thousand <5507 chilioi>** years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

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- 4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ **for a thousand <5507 chilioi>** years.
- 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until **the thousand <5507 chilioi>** years were completed. This is the first resurrection.
- 6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign **with Him for a thousand <5507 chilioi>** years.
- 7 When **the thousand <5507 chilioi>** years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,

5505 chillas *khil-ee-as'*

Luke 14:31

"Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten **thousand <5505 chillas >** *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty **thousand <5505 chillas >?**

Acts 4:4

But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five **thousand <5505 chillas>**.

1 Corinthians 10:8

Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three **thousand <5505 chillas>** fell in one day.

Revelation 5:11

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and **thousands of thousands <5505 chillas>**,

Revelation 7:4-8

- 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four **thousand <5505 chillas>** sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:
- 5 From the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand **<5505 chillas>** were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve **thousand <5505 chillas>**, from the tribe of Gad twelve **thousand <5505 chillas>**,
- 6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand **<5505 chillas>**, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand **<5505 chillas>**, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve **thousand <5505 chillas>**,

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- 7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve **thousand <5505 chilas>**, from the tribe of Levi twelve **thousand <5505 chilas>**, from the tribe of Issachar twelve **thousand <5505 chilas>**,
8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve **thousand <5505 chilas>**, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand **<5505 chilas>**, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve **thousand <5505 chilas>** were sealed.

Revelation 11:13

And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven **thousand <5505 chilas>** people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four **thousand <5505 chilas>**, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.

Revelation 14:3

And they *sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four **thousand <5505 chilas>** who had been purchased from the earth.

4000 pentakischilioi *pen-tak-is-khil'-ee-oy*

Matthew 14:21

There were about **five thousand <4000 pentakischilioi>** men who ate, besides women and children.

Matthew 16:9

"Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the **five thousand <4000 pentakischilioi>**, and how many baskets *full* you picked up?

Mark 6:44

There were **five thousand <4000 pentakischilioi>** men who ate the loaves.

Mark 8:19

when I broke the **five <4000 pentakischilioi>** loaves for the **five thousand <4000 pentakischilioi>**, how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up?" They *said to Him, "Twelve."

Luke 9:14

(For there were about **five thousand <4000 pentakischilioi>** men.) And He said to His

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disciples, "Have them sit down *to eat* in groups of about fifty each."

John 6:10

Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about **five thousand** <4000 pentakischilioi>.

5070 tetrakischilioi tet-rak-is-khil'-ee-oy

Matthew 15:38

And those who ate were **four thousand** <5070 tetrakischilioi> men, besides women and children.

Matthew 16:10

"Or the seven loaves of the **four thousand** <5070 tetrakischilioi>, and how many large baskets *full* you picked up?

Mark 8:9

About **four thousand** <5070 tetrakischilioi> were *there*; and He sent them away.

Mark 8:20

"When *I broke* the seven for the **four thousand** <5070 tetrakischilioi>, how many large baskets full of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they *said to Him, "Seven."

Acts 21:38

"Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the **four thousand** <5070 tetrakischilioi> men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"

3461 murias moo-ree'-as

Luke 12:1

Under these circumstances, after so **many thousands** <3461 murias> of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first *of all*, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Acts 19:19

And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and *began* burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it **fifty thousand** <3461 murias> pieces of silver.

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Acts 21:20

And when they heard it they *began* glorifying God; and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many **thousands** <3461 murias> there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

Hebrews 12:22

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to **myriads** <3461 murias> of angels,

Jude 1:14

It was also about these men *that* Enoch, *in* the seventh *generation* from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with **many thousands** <3461 murias> of His holy ones,

Revelation 5:11

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was **myriads of myriads** <3461 murias>, and thousands of thousands,

Revelation 9:16

The number of the armies of the horsemen was **two hundred million** <3461 murias>; I heard the number of them.

3463 murioi moo'-ree-oi

Matthew 18:24

"When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him **ten thousand** <3463 murioi> talents was brought to him.

1 Corinthians 4:15

For if you were to have **countless** <3463 murioi> tutors in Christ, yet *you would* not *have* many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

1 Corinthians 14:19

however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than **ten thousand** <3463 murioi> words in a tongue.

1367 dischilioi dis-khil'-ee-oy

Mark 5:13

Jesus gave them permission. And coming out, the unclean spirits entered the swine; and

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the herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, about **two thousand** <1367 **dischilioi**> of them; and they were drowned in the sea.

2035 heptakischilioi *hep-tak-is-khil'-ee-oy*

Romans 11:4

But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself **SEVEN THOUSAND** <2035 **heptakischilioi**> MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."