

# A critical analysis of the millennial reign of Christ in Revelation 20: 1-10



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Waweru, Humphrey Mwangi.

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the issue of the millennial reign of Christ in Revelation 20: 1-10. It is an attempt to investigate whether the millennium is a future event or already inaugurated. The Apocalypse has been the focus of attention of many end time movements down through the ages. This thesis picks up one of the most popular issues out of such a focus. One of the issues in the Apocalypse of John is the expectation of a thousand year reign of Christ. During the period of early Christianity up to the middle ages the question of the nature of the millennium has been controversial. Recently the debate over the millennial reign of Christ in the Apocalypse has intensified more than ever before. Three major views have been advocated and such views have brought in a greater dilemma, since the reader of the Apocalypse has to choose one of the views. Having grown up in an evangelical religious background, which places emphasis upon apocalyptic ideologies; I found myself becoming more and more attracted to this debate. At last I have entered the wagon with a view to demonstrate, in my own way, that the millennial reign is already actualised rather than expected. This sounds very controversial compared to what has always been thought by many Christians since their early days of Sunday School. This 'territory' has been trod by various scholars so much so that I am not in a position to claim to be a pioneer in this investigation. I endeavour to re-examine the issue of millennium in the light of a sociological analysis from my own perspective. I intend to perceive the other side of the mountain that has been hidden from me all along ( as a hidden transcript of the Apocalypse). After having established the task of rethinking millennium. I wish to go further and look at the East African concept of millennium, even though no comparative study is intended at this level of my research, apart from laying bare the framework, such is very important for the inculturation of theology today. This thesis will be tabulated into three main parts, the first deals with sociology of sects and the Apocalypse, in this part a model will be formulated, which will be applied in the delineation of the Apocalypse community in chapter three. The second part deals with the concept of millennium within the Bible and ends up with an exegesis of the passage that clearly mentions this term. The third part deals with the East African concept of millennium and the conclusion of the whole thesis. All Biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version Bible, while all the abbreviations follow Killian (1985).

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Revelation 20. From Armageddon to the Start of the Millennium. Following the return of Christ, several events happen. Pre-Millennial....All pre-millennial interpreters consider the second advent of Christ preceding a millennial kingdom on earth. During the 1000 year reign of Christ all the covenant promises made to Israel are fulfilled, Israel becomes chief nation on the earth. Revelation, literally fulfilled by chapters 6 thru 19 cover a 7-year tribulation period ending with the return of Christ. If the population of the earth when the tribulation begins is 10 billion, according to the book of Revelation at least 47% will die in the first 3 ½ years. In addition, in the second half a substantial amount of those left will join the kingdom of the Beast, be killed as martyrs or die from the bowl judgments. Revelation 20 is generally viewed as a crux interpretum in the debate over the timing and nature of the millennium. In verses 1-3, the apostle John describes a vision in which Satan is bound and imprisoned in the abyss for a thousand years. Pre-millennialists consider this passage to be compelling evidence for a future millennium, because this restriction of Satan is clearly incompatible with his activity and influence in the present age. The Premillennial Argument. In Rev 20:1-3, the apostle John's vision focuses on the status of Satan during the millennial reign of Christ: Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.