

The Millennium

We come this evening to study the millennium. There are basically three different millennial views.

Historic pre-millennial view teaches that Christ will return before the millennium to establish a visible, glorious kingdom on earth. **Dispensational pre-millennial view** teaches that Christ will come in several phases: 1) secretly; 2) publicly; 3) finally.

Post-millennial view teaches that Christ will return after the millennium; the church of Christ will increasingly grow in the future until the majority of human beings are converted to Christ and the world will be more or less Christianized.

A-millennial view teaches that we should not look for a literal fulfillment of a 1000 year glorious age. Instead this number is given as a symbolic picture of the history of the church from the ascension of Christ till the end of the age.

Christ – The Builder (A-millennium view)

Revelation 20:1-6 gives a symbolic description of the entire age of the New Testament, from Christ's ascension to His 2nd coming. It sets forth 2 things: 1) the binding of Satan (vs. 1-3); 2) the intermediate state of the Christian who has died (vs. 4-6). The only place where we know Christ dealt a decisive blow to the power of Satan is by His death and resurrection. There He bound the strong man so that He could spoil His goods (Mark 3:27). "...having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). John 12:31: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. So, where does the Bible speak of the binding of Satan? With Christ's death and resurrection. Let us keep this in view also with this chapter: Christ has ascended and is sitting at the right hand of God. We are told that Satan is bound. That means that sovereign restraint is placed on Satan that he cannot deceive the nations anymore (vs. 3). Ever since Pentecost, the nations are being undeceived.

At the end of this millennium, Satan is loosed for a little while, and will unite the world against the church, with the intent of exterminating the name of Christ (20:7ff). The anti-Christ will have a short rule, but then Christ will come.

What the post- and pre-millennials have in common?

- 1000 years will be a literal period of time in history before the end of this present world
- The kingdom of Christ is earthly in its nature rather than spiritual
- Large sections of the Bible are not for the church today

Christ – The Glorifier (Post-millennium view)

Post-millennials look for a golden age. Christians will be the majority, not the minority. There will be no persecution, a sharp decrease of sickness, absence of war. There will be earthly

peace, prosperity and power. The majority of people will be converted, but not everyone. Nor will sin be completely eradicated in the world, and Christians will still struggle with sinfulness.

The main points:

- 1) There will be an earthly form of the kingdom of Christ.
- 2) Teaching such as the tribulation, great falling away, the increase of wickedness is regarded as past already

Response:

- 1) The kingdom of Christ is not earthly in nature, but spiritual in nature (Jn. 18:33-37).
- 2) What about parts of Scripture that speak of the last days as days in which lawlessness abounds? (Matt. 24; 2 Thess. 2; 2 Tim. 3:2; 2 Pet. 2,3; Revelation)
- 3) Is the world getting better?
- 4) Is the glorious age to be the object of our hope, or Christ? Question & Answer 52.

Christ – The Rescuer (dispensational pre-millennium view)

Pre-mills believe that Christ's coming will inaugurate His 1000-year rule over the whole world from the city of Jerusalem in Palestine with the Jewish nation restored as His kingdom people. This will be the millennium kingdom of peace, power, prosperity, promised to Old Testament Israel and is spoken of in Revelation 20.

The details of this theory are as follows: Christ will come at any moment secretly to take the true members of the church into the clouds for 7 years (rapture). Christ comes, but this coming is invisible and secret. This, they say, is the coming of Christ which is imminent. After this has happened, anti-Christ will be revealed in history. The anti-Christ will make a new covenant with the Jews. This covenant will last 3 ½ years. After this, Anti-Christ will turn against the Jews in the tribulation for 3 ½ years (based on a strange interpretation of the 70 weeks in Daniel 9). Then Christ will come visibly, and publicly and destroy Anti-Christ, and set up the kingdom in Jerusalem and restore the Jews as His kingdom people. This means that during the 3 ½ years of persecution, there will be a massive conversion of the Jews. After the 1000 years of Christ's personal rule from Jerusalem, Satan will be loosed for a certain season. Then hordes of ungodly people will gather an army of jet planes, bombs, machine guns and will launch an earthly attack upon King Jesus sitting on a white throne in Jerusalem. Then He will destroy them, and Satan.

One of their main principles is: literal interpretation of the Bible. They take this literalism to an extreme. Satan will be physically and literally bound with a literal chain. Does the Old Testament speak about the land of Canaan being the property of Israel, then Canaan must be the property of Israel. Does Ezekiel prophesy of a new temple, then they must have a new temple.

Expectation of Christ

“Therefore, we expect that great day with a most ardent desire, to the end that we may fully enjoy the promises of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Art. 37).