
CHAPTER 18

THE MILLENNIUM

INTRODUCTION (REV. 20:1-6)

The word 'Millennium' means one thousand years (from Latin: mille, thousand and anum, year; millennium, "thousand years"). The term 'Millennium' comes from Revelation 20:2-7, where Christ is said to reign for a literal one thousand years with all saints, including those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus during the Tribulation (v.4). The saints are said to have come to life, but the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended (Rev. 20:4,5).

During this period the devil would be 'bound' and sealed in the bottomless pit (v.2). After this period the devil is released as the event leading to the final conflict and overthrow of the devil and all his allies (20:7-10). Millennialism is thus the belief in a literal thousand-year reign. Presently, three major views establish their identity by their interpretation on the time and nature of this Millennium, which are A-millennialism, Post-Millennialism and Pre-Millennialism. We again state that on this subject the Bible was written straightforwardly, but these scholastic views are now held in Christendom.

A-MILLENNIALISM

TIME FRAME: *Church Age - Second Coming - Judgment - Eternal Kingdom*

This view holds that the millennium is symbolic and that there is no literal (Greek, a, without), thousand years reign of Christ on earth. This position declares the reference in Revelation 20:1-10 as symbolic rather than literal and that it refers to the present Church Age. Christ's reign in the millennium is not bodily on earth but began in heaven when He declared, And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has

been given to Me in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Accordingly, dead saints are reigning with Him in heaven. This view will interpret the obscure images and symbols with what is clear and easy to understand.

To this school of thought, the Parousia is a one single event but has many sides to it as an act of God. When Christ returns both believers and unbelievers will be resurrected. The bodies of all saints will be reunited with their spirits in heaven and to be rewarded there (2Cor. 5:8-10). Unbelievers will be raised to the final judgment to be eternally condemned. However the thought of one thousand intervening years of Christ's visible reign upon earth is absolutely rejected by this view.

Many A-millennialists interpret the 'binding' of Satan (during the millennium) as his being bound by Christ throughout his whole redeeming work (Matt.12: 29). The thousand-year reign is exercised not on earth, but in heaven with Christ, and refers to the gospel age between the two comings of Christ. This interpretation can easily undermine any concerns about the final events, and can also lead to over-spiritualization.

POST-MILLENNIALISM

TIME FRAME: Church Age - Millennium - Second Coming - Judgment - Eternal Kingdom

This view sees the millennium as an earthly reign of a thousand years; and the Parousia takes place after (post) the millennium. The thousand-year period is a time of great prosperity in the preaching of the gospel.

The gospel, it is believed, would spread throughout the earth, winning universal acceptance, to usher in the glorious appearing and the establishment of the eternal order. The biblical passages cited in support of this view include Matt. 28:18-20, seen as a promise of the evangelization of the nations, and Jesus declaration of the victory of the church (Matt. 16:18).

This view was popular in the late 1800 - early 1900, when a worldwide missionary movement emerged, and the scientific and technological advancement of the western world made mankind hopeful of stepping into the 'perfect blessed age' or millennium. The witness to the nations of the preaching of the gospel was said to be

taking its course (Matt. 24:14). Few people hold to this view today because of the general crisis in human culture, decline in church attendance, and the immense challenges facing Christian missions. Besides, when the going gets tough against Christians as in Matt. 13:31-33; 24:12; 2Thess. 2:3; Rev. 19:17-21, this view is weakened.

PRE-MILLENNIALISM

TIME FRAME: Church Age - Second Coming - Millennium - Resurrection & Judgment of Unbelievers - Eternal Kingdom

The Millennium is the 1,000-year period of the earthly reign of Jesus Christ in fulfillment of the Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), David (2 Samuel 7:4-7), and the New Covenants (Jeremiah 31:31-34) as the reigning Messiah. There are differing Pre-Millennialism positions:

Pre-Tribulation Pre-Millennialism or Dispensational Pre-Millennialism

The belief that the Second Coming is in two phases with the Church being raptured before the seven (7) years Tribulation; though the second phase of His Coming takes place before the literal millennium comes on. Christ's return is thus both pre-tribulational (1Thess. 4:13-5:12; 2Thess. 2: 1-10) and pre-millennial (Zech. 14:1-21; Rev. 19: 11- 20:6). This view best fits the classical Pentecostal sound teaching and better supports the eschatological teaching of the New Testament, to which the early Church subscribed. This position strongly upholds the literal 1000 years of reign on earth. Christ's return will thus not only bring an end to the Church Age, but also allow God's wrath on sinful humanity before ending human history under the curse of the fall. This Dispensational Pre-Millennialism is the view that best fits my doctrinal position.

I have not cited the proponents of the schools of thought in the above discussion but to simply make use of their stated views. One would observe that the Scriptures were written with the aim to lead to truth and not to confuse us. First of all, even though it is only in Revelation 20 that the word millennium appears, the Canon of Scripture clearly supports a literal bodily return of Christ (Zech. 14:4, 5; Matt. 24:3,29-31; Rev. 1:7) to be followed by the battle of Armageddon (Rev.

19:11-21) and His earthly reign (Rev. 11:15; 19:16; 20: 4-6). With other time reckonings in Revelation, say 1260 days or 42 months, I believe that the millennium would be a literal 1000 prophetic or biblical calendar years of 360 days a year.

We know that time will be no more only in eternity, until then man is governed by time! If the Anti-Christ will rule for seven (7) years and will be destroyed at His Coming, then the millennial reign of peace and long life is also certain (Isa. 11:6-9; 65: 20). If the saints will reign with Christ, then it could begin only in the Millennium for even in the Tribulation people are still being martyred (and not reigning) for their faith (Rev. 6:9, 10).

Other Pre-Millennial positions

It is important to note that other Pre-Millennial views exist (either stated or otherwise). They will nonetheless not pass my subjective analysis having already stated my doctrinal position above. However, mention will be made of two of them for readers' attention. The two such views are below stated:

i) Classical or historic Pre-Millennialism: It is the belief that the Church will go through the Tribulation and then be raptured the Second Coming, with the Rapture and the Return as the same single event, taking place before the literal millennium comes on. Though this is an older Pre-Millennial view, it does not pass the sound apostolic teaching from say 2Thess. 2:1- 9. Here, Paul agrees that the Rapture has to come before 'the day of the Lord' (vs. 1, 2). But for this to happen, he further states 'the day of the Lord' starts only after the "falling away" comes and the Anti-Christ (the antecedent of the Tribulation) is revealed (vs. 3).

ii) Mid-Tribulation (Rapture) Pre-Millennialism: It is the belief that the Church will go through the first half of the Tribulation before the Rapture and then the actual Return takes place before the literal millennium comes on. Again, the "falling away" and the revealing of the Anti-Christ (the antecedent of the Tribulation) can come only at the beginning of the Tribulation. The Jews cannot resume the 70th week prophesied by Daniel, while the Church is still around (ref Rom. 11:25-29). If so, then the Anti-Christ cannot also sign a pact with them. Besides, the wrath of God does not start only after mid-Tribulation but even the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17) before the seventh seal for the

sounding of the first trumpet at the middle of Tribulation (Rev. 8:1f) would have shown divine judgment or wrath on earth.

DESIGNATIONS OF THE MILLENNIUM

The Millennium is referred to as the eschatological Kingdom of heaven coming on earth (Matthew 6:10), the Kingdom of God appearing literally on earth (Luke 19:11), the Kingdom of Christ on earth (Rev. 11:15), and the world to come (Heb. 2:5).

Its Government and Subjects

1. Its head will be Jesus Christ with Old & New Testament saints as emissaries (Rev. 19:16).
2. Its Capital will be Jerusalem with a fifth or millennium Temple (Isaiah 2:3; Ezek. 40).

Its Subjects will be, 1) Old & New Testament saints will be there in their glorified bodies, 2) Living Saints who populate the millennium and 3) Others born to live normal human lives during the Millennium (Rev. 19:11-20:10).

The living saints who enter the Millennium will populate the world. Since Satan will be bound demonic power will be short-circuited. However, people will be born with a fallen nature requiring the rule of law from the Lord Himself. On the other hand, we will be like angels who do not marry. In any case we cannot tell in detail the movements of us the glorified saints. We know only that we shall reign with Him. It is possible that we may shuttle in between the Earth and Heaven, where we would have our heavenly mansions (John 14:1-3). The presence of angels still as ministering spirits will come to light. After all in the second phase of the *parousia* Jesus returns to the earth in the company of His angels and saints.

It's relation to Satan

During this period Satan will be bound until the very end of the Millennium, when Satan will be loosed in order to deceive the nations and lead one final revolt (Gog and Magog battle) against Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:2-3). Satan would be thrown into the lake of fire after that battle (Rev. 20:7)

CHARACTERISTICS/NATURE OF THE MILLENNIUM

During the millennium there will be the direct rule of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. All earthly kingdoms will come to an end, and the government of the earth will all be vested in Christ Jesus our Lord. There will be no room for opposition with the removal of Satan and his incarnate Anti-Christ, False Prophet and also all his followers. All glorified saints of all dispensations will also live and rule in the kingdom with Him. All of these will live together with un-glorified saints who will continue to procreate the earth. The Bible hints that the elements of the earth are waiting to enjoy the sons of God's coming into glory to be loosed from its bondage to decay (Rom. 8:21). Naturally, godly Angelic presence will also be heightened. This being the case, a sense very near that of heaven (though not completely so since the old earth continues) will permeate the millennium. So, the future One thousand years (millennial) rule and reign of Jesus Christ will be characterized by:

1. **Peace:** National and individual peace will be the fruit of Messiah's reign. Perfect peace will result, as there will be no crime, no wars (Isa. 2:4; 9:4-7; 11:6-9, 32: 17, 18; 33:5, 6, 54:13; 55:12; 60:18; 65:25; 66:12; Ezek. 28:26; 34:25, 28; Hosea 2:18; Micah 4:2,3; Zech. 9:10).
2. **Comfort:** King Jesus will through regents personally minister to every need, so that there will be the fullness of comfort in that day (Isa. 1:26, 27; 12:1, 2; 29:22, 23; 30:26; 40:1, 2; 49:13; 61:3-7; 66:13, 14; Zeph. 3:18-20; Zech. 9:11,12; Rev. 21:4).
3. **Righteousness:** Righteous acts will be seen everywhere. Any deviations will be accorded prompt corrective measures (Isaiah 60:21).
4. **Joy:** The fullness of joy will be a distinctive mark of the age (Isa. 9:3, 4; 12:3-6; 14:7, 8; 25:8,9; 30:29; 42:1, 10-12; 52:9; 60:15; 61:7, 10; 65:18, 19; 66:10-14; Jer. 30:18,19; 31:13,14; Zeph. 3:14-17; Zech. 8:18, 19; 10:6,7).
5. **Holiness:** The theocratic kingdom will be a holy kingdom, in which holiness is manifested through the King and the King's subjects. The land will be holy, the city holy, the temple holy, and the subjects holy unto the Lord (Isa.1:26, 27; 4:3, 4; 29:18-23; 31:6, 7; 35:8, 9; 52:1; 60:21; 61:10; Jer. 31:23; Ezek. 36:24-31; 37:23,24; 43:7-12; 45:1; Joel 3:21; Zeph. 3:11, 13; Zech. 8:3; 13:1, 2; 14:20, 21).

6. **Removal of the Curse:** The original curse, which was placed upon creation will be removed, so that there will be abundant productivity to the earth. Animal creation will be changed so as to lose its venom (Gen. 3:17-19; Isa. 11:6-9; 35:9; 65: 21-25).
7. **Sickness removed:** The ministry of the King as a healer will be seen throughout the age, so that sickness and even death, except as a penal measure in dealing with overt sin, will be removed (Isa. 33:24; Jer. 30:17; Ezek.34:16).
8. **Reproduction by the living people:** The living saints who go into the millennium in their natural bodies will bring forth children throughout the age. The earth's population will soar. These born in the age will not be born without a sin nature, so salvation will be required (Jer. 30:20; 31:29; Ezek. 47:22; Zech. 10:8).
9. **Life - No Immaturity:** Longevity will be restored (Isa. 65:20). Perfect health - no sickness, deformity or disease - no AIDS!
10. **Glory:** The kingdom will be a glorious kingdom, in which the glory of God will find its full manifestation (Isa.4:2; 24:34; 35:2; 40:5; 60:1-9).
11. **Justice:** There will be the administration of perfect justice to every individual (Isa. 9:7; 11:5; 32:16; 42:1-4; 65:21-23; Jer. 31:23- 25; Zeph. 3:18-20; Zech. 9:11, 12; Rev. 21:4).
12. **Full knowledge:** The ministry of the King will bring the subjects of his kingdom into full knowledge. Doubtless there will be an unparalleled teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 11:1, 2, 9; 41:19, 20; 54:13; Hab. 2:14).
13. **Instruction:** This knowledge will come about through the instruction that issues from the King (Isa. 2:2,3; 12:3-6; 25:9; 29:17-24; 30:20,21; 32:3,4; 49:10; 52:8; Jer. 3:14,15; 23:1-4; Micah 4:2).
14. **Healing of the deformed:** Accompanying this ministry will be the healing of all deformity at the inception of the millennium (Isa. 29:17-19; 35:3-6; 61:1,2; Jer. 31:8; Micah 4:6,7; Zeph. 3:19).
15. **Protection:** There will be a supernatural work of preservation of life in the millennial age through the King (Isa. 41:8-14; 62:8,9; Jer. 32:27; 23:6; Ezek. 34:27; Joel 3:16,17; Amos 9:15; Zech.8:14,15; 9:8; 14:10,11).
16. **Real freedom:** There will be no social, political or religious oppression in that day (Isa. 14:3-6; 42:6, 7; 49:8, 9; Zech. 9:11, 12).

17. **Labor:** The period will not be characterized by idleness, but there will be a perfect economic system, in which the needs of men are abundantly provided for by labor in the system, under the guidance of the King. There will be a fully developed industrialized society, providing for the needs of the King's subjects (Isa. 62:8, 9; 65:21-23; Jer. 31:5, 12; Ezek. 48:18, 19).
18. **Economic prosperity:** The perfect labor situation will produce economic abundance, so that there will be no want (Isa. 4:1; 35:1,2,7; 30:23-25; 62:8,9; 65:21-23; Jer. 31:5,12; Ezek. 34:26; 36:29,30; Joel 2:21-27; Amos 9:13,14; Micah 4:1,4; Zech. 8:11,12; 9:16,17)
19. **Increase of light:** There will be an increase of solar and lunar light in the age. This increased light probably is a major cause in the increased productivity of the earth (Isa. 4:5; 30:26; 60:19, 20; Zech.2:5).
20. **Unified language:** The language barriers will be removed so that there can be free social interchange (Zeph.3:9)
21. **Unified worship:** All the world will unite in the worship of God and God's Messiah (Isa. 45:23; 52:1, 7-10; 66:17-23; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:2; 14:16; 8:23; 9:7; Mal. 1:11; Rev. 5:9-14). The fifth Temple would be built; it will be very magnificent (Ezek. 40-47). The first four Temples on the Temple Mount would have been: 1) Solomon's 2) Zerubbabel's 3) Herod's and 4) the Tribulation Temple which would all give way to this last Temple in the Millennium. There will be no need of a Temple in the New Jerusalem of eternity.
22. **The manifest presence of God:** God's presence will be fully recognized and fellowship with God will be experienced to an unprecedented degree (Ezek. 37:27, 28; Zech. 2:2, 10-13; Rev. 21:30). The fullness of the Spirit as divine presence and enablement will be the experience of all who are in subjection to the authority of the King (Isa.32: 13-15; 41:1; 44:3; 59:19, 21; 61:1; Ezek. 11:19, 20; 36:26,27; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28,29).
23. **The perpetuity of the millennial state:** Some of the things that which characterizes the millennial age is not viewed as temporary, but eternal and will be reflected in Heaven (Isa. 51:6-8; 55:3, 13; 56:5; 60:19, 20; 61:8; Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26-28; 43:7-9; Dan. 9:24; Hos. 2:19- 23; Joel 3:20; Amos 9:15).