



# *the* MILLENNIUM

Is the Kingdom of God

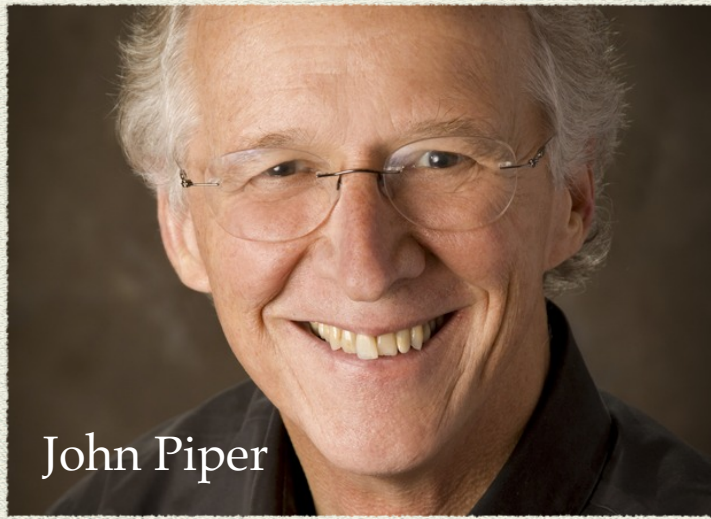
*Literal, spiritual or symbolic?*



## An Evening of Eschatology with John Piper



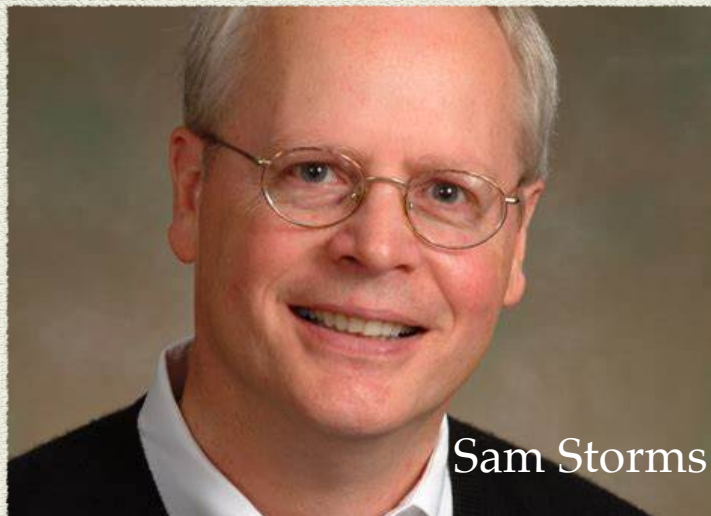




John Piper



Douglas  
Wilson



Sam Storms



Jim Hamilton



# The Kingdom of God

*What is it? Is it now or future?*



# Why is it an important topic?

- ◆ Because the way you interpret the Millennial Kingdom effects the way you...
- ◆ Interpret all Scripture (literal or allegorical hermeneutic)
- ◆ Understand your mission in life (what Christ has called you & His Church to do)
- ◆ Understand all of prophetic Scripture



# Definitions ~ Millennium

- ◆ The **one thousand-year** reign of Christ spoken of in Rev. 20
- ◆ “Millennium” comes from the Latin *mille* = “thousand” & *annus* = “year”
- ◆ Often referred to as *chiliasm* in early Church literature, which is the Greek form of the Latin *millennium*.



# The text in question ~ Revelation 20:1-7

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a **thousand years**; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the **thousand years** were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a **thousand years**. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the **thousand years** were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a **thousand years**. Now when the **thousand years** have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ”



# The Question...

- ◆ Did the Holy Spirit mean for us to interpret this section of scripture **literally** or **allegorically**?
- ◆ Specifically, did the Holy Spirit mean a period of a **literal** thousand years or should we understand the thousand years in a **non-literal** way?



# Three Views\*

*of the Millennial Kingdom*

*Pre*-millennial

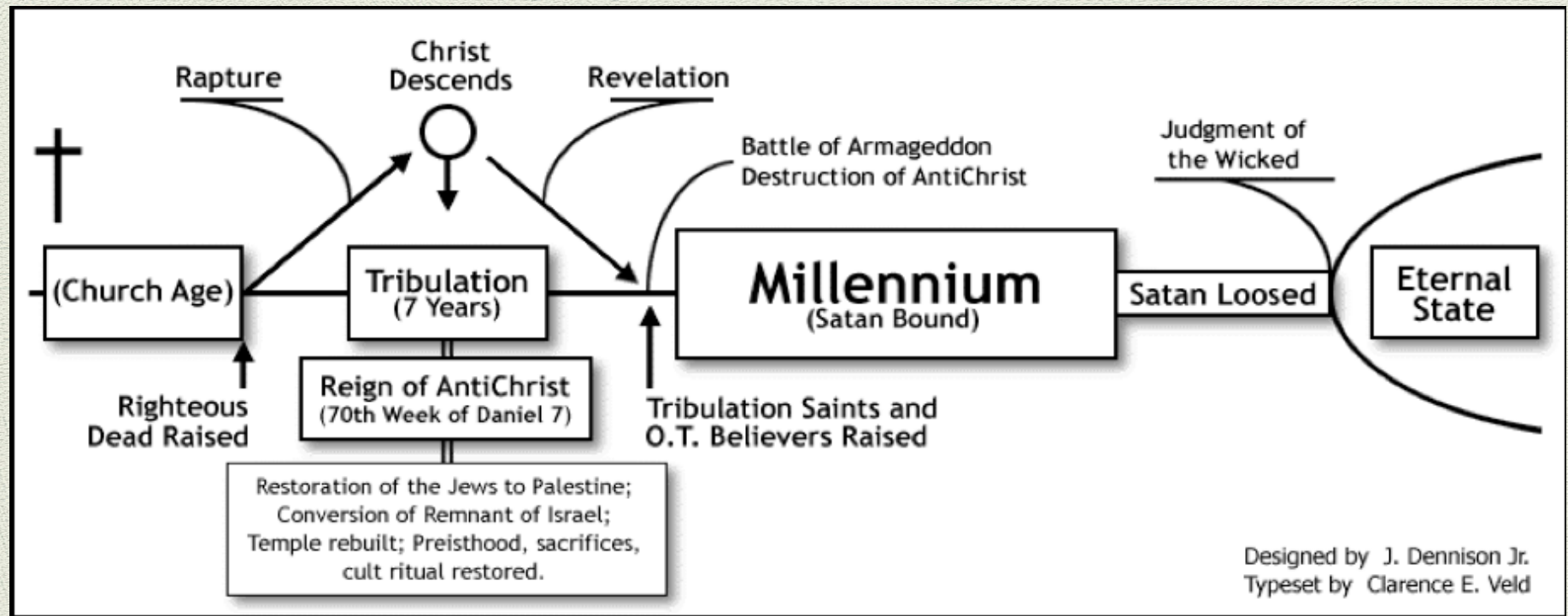
*A*-millennial

*Post*-millennial

*\*these are the general classifications, however there are of course variations  
within each of these eschatological views*



# Pre-Millennial



## Literal 1,000 Year Kingdom



John Walvoord writes:

*“An interpretation that the Second Coming of Christ will occur **before** (“pre”) His **literal** reign of one thousand years on earth. After His victorious intervention into history, Christ will personally reign from Jerusalem producing a time of peace, prosperity and righteousness. Premillennialists see the present era as the Church Age, which is a separate and distinct work in God’s plan from that of Israel. Christ’s redemptive work is the only basis for salvation regardless of the period of time a believer lives under.”*

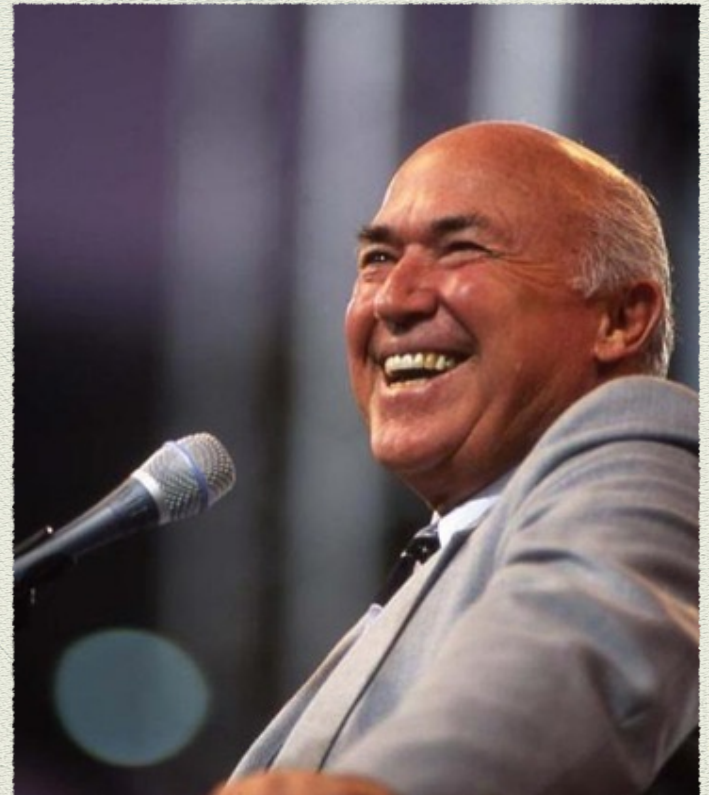


- ◆ Following the 7-year Tribulation Christ will return to the earth *before* (pre) His millennial rule & reign on earth for a **literal** of 1,000 years.
- ◆ At His return Jesus will destroy the armies of the AC; toss the AC & FP into the Lake of Fire & place Satan in the Abyss for a **literal** 1,000 years.
- ◆ The earth will be regenerated to an Eden-like state over, which Christ will rule supreme for a **literal** of 1,000 years..
- ◆ Old Testament saints & the Tribulation Martyrs will be resurrected after Jesus' return to earth (the "first resurrection" - Rev. 20:5) who along with both Old & New Testaments who have returned with Christ, will rule & reign with Christ for a **literal** of 1,000 years..
- ◆ There will be two resurrections; the 1st of the Righteous, the 2nd of the Wicked, separated by a **literal** 1,000 years (Rev. 20:5).



# Proponents

- ◆ Chuck Smith
- ◆ Thomas Ice
- ◆ John Walvoord
- ◆ John Piper  
*historic premillennial*
- ◆ John MacArthur
- ◆ Wayne Grudem
- ◆ Jim Hamilton  
*historic premillennial*
- ◆ George Eldon Ladd  
*historic premillennial*
- ◆ Mark Hitchcock





# Premillennial Churches & Movements

- ◆ Southern Baptist & many other Baptist denominations
- ◆ Assemblies of God
- ◆ Four Square
- ◆ Plymouth Brethren
- ◆ Calvary Chapels



# A-millennial (426 AD)



## Spiritual Kingdom



Floyd E. Hamilton

“...that Christ’s millennial kingdom extends from His Resurrection from the tomb to the time of His Second Coming on the clouds at the end of the age. At no time will Christ reign on the earth in Jerusalem. On earth, Christ’s kingdom ‘is not of this world’, but He reigns in the hearts of His people on earth...for a ‘thousand years’, the perfect, complete time between the two comings of Christ. After the Second Coming of Christ, believers from all of history will enter into heaven for eternity immediately following the final and single judgment of all mankind.”



- ♦ Christ will **not** reign on earth at any time.
- ♦ “A thousand years” is **not** literal, rather it is **symbolic** of the time between Christ’s 1st & 2nd Advent (the Church Age). \*Augustine believed the Millennium began prior to Christ’s 1st Advent and would end at His 2nd (perhaps a literal 1,000 years).
- ♦ Christ is presently ruling from Heaven where He is seated on David’s throne ruling in the hearts of believers.
- ♦ Satan is presently bound & unable to “deceive the nations (Rev. 20:2-3).
- ♦ There will be only one Resurrection at the end of this present Age for both the Righteous & the Wicked.
- ♦ Often associated with “**Replacement Theology**” as adherents believe that the Church has replaced Israel in God’s program such that all the promises made to Israel & the Patriarchs are now fulfilled **spiritually** in the Church (ie. no **literal** Kingdom, rather a **spiritual** Kingdom).



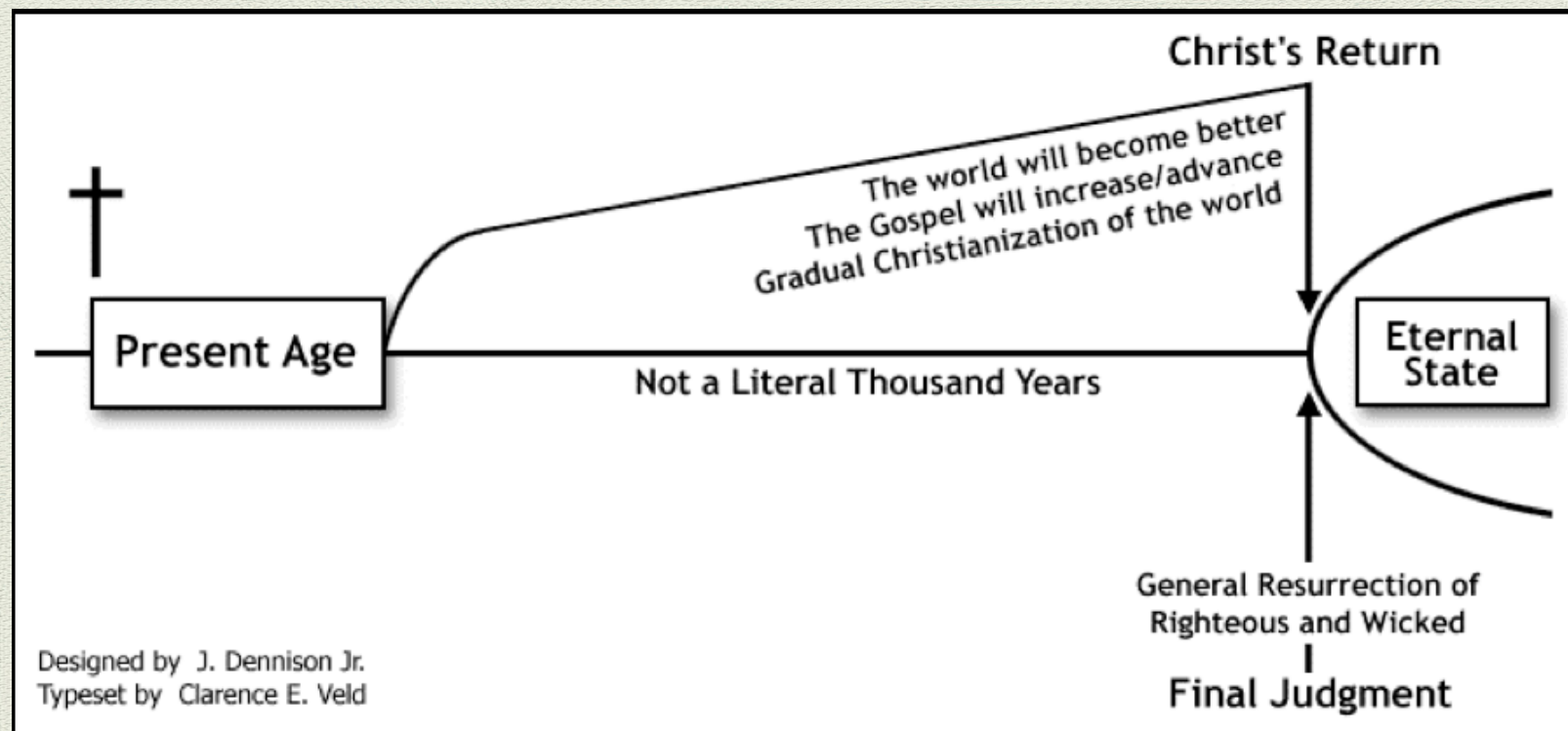
# Proponents

- ◆ Augustine
- ◆ Martin Luther
- ◆ Tim Keller
- ◆ Sam Storms
- ◆ Floyd Hamilton
- ◆ J.I. Packer
- ◆ Reformed Churches, Covenant Churches,  
& Roman Catholicism





# Post-Millennial (1600 AD)



**A symbolic Kingdom**



L. Boettner

“We have defined Postmillennialism as that view of the last things which holds that *the Kingdom of God is now* being extended in the world through the preaching of the Gospel and the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of individuals, *that the world eventually is to be Christianized, and that the return of Christ is to occur at the close of a long period of righteousness and peace commonly called the ‘Millennium.’* It should be added that on postmillennial principles the second coming of Christ will be followed immediately by the general resurrection, the general judgment, and the introduction of heaven and hell in their fullness. *The Millennium to which the Postmillennialist looks forward is thus a golden age of spiritual prosperity during this present dispensation, that is, during the Church age, and is to be brought about through forces now active in the world.*”



- ♦ The Kingdom of God is **presently** being built by the Church, which, will ultimately usher in a Golden Age of Peace & Righteousness on earth called the Millennium.
- ♦ The duration of this future Millennium is **not** a literal 1,000 years, but rather a long period of time.
- ♦ Some Post-Millennialists point to Jesus' declaration in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-20) as the beginning of the Kingdom\*, a work that the Church will complete.
- ♦ Christ will **not** reign on earth at any time.
- ♦ There will be only one Resurrection of both the Righteous & the Wicked at the end of this present age.
- ♦ Often called "Dominion", "Kingdom Now" & "\*Inaugurated Kingdom" theology.



# Proponents

- ◆ Douglas Wilson
- ◆ John Owen
- ◆ B.B. Warfield
- ◆ Jonathan Edwards
- ◆ R.C. Sproul
- ◆ Ken Gentry
- ◆ The Pilgrims & Puritans
- ◆ Reformed Presbyterian Churches
- ◆ Some churches within the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches





# Comparison of the 3 views

	Pre-Mill	A-Mill	Post-Mill
♦ Literal millennium	♦ Yes	♦ No	♦ No
♦ Resurrection before millennium	♦ One	♦ None	♦ None
♦ 1,000 years of Revelation 20	♦ Future	♦ Present	♦ Present
♦ Resurrection(s)	♦ Two	♦ One	♦ One
♦ Consistent literal understanding of prophecy	♦ Yes	♦ No	♦ No
♦ Unconditional Old Testament covenants	♦ Yes	♦ No	♦ No
♦ Revelation	♦ Predictive	♦ Descriptive	♦ Descriptive



# The Debate

- ◆ Will the Millennial Kingdom be a *literal* Kingdom on Earth where Jesus rules supreme for a *literal* 1,000?
- ◆ Or is the Millennial Kingdom a present *spiritual* reality in which Jesus rules from Heaven in the hearts of His people on earth until Christ returns?
- ◆ Or is the Millennial Kingdom *symbolic* of a Golden Age on earth brought about by the Christianization of the world?





*What does the Bible say & what did the Prophets, Apostles & Saints look for?*



# The Proclamation of the Prophets

*The testimony of the Old Testament Prophets regarding the  
Kingdom Age*



# Daniel



Dan. 2:44

"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a **kingdom** which shall never be destroyed; and the **kingdom** shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Dan. 7:13-14

"I was watching in the night visions,  
And behold, *One* like the Son of Man,  
Coming with the clouds of heaven!  
He came to the Ancient of Days,  
And they brought Him near before Him.

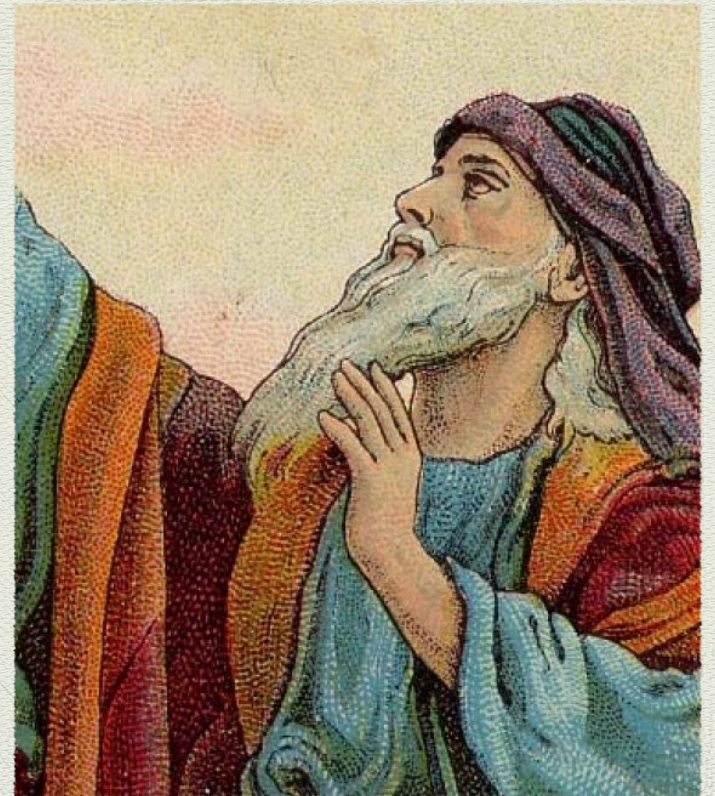
**Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a **kingdom**,**  
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is*  
an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,  
And His **kingdom** *the one*  
Which shall not be destroyed."



# Isaiah

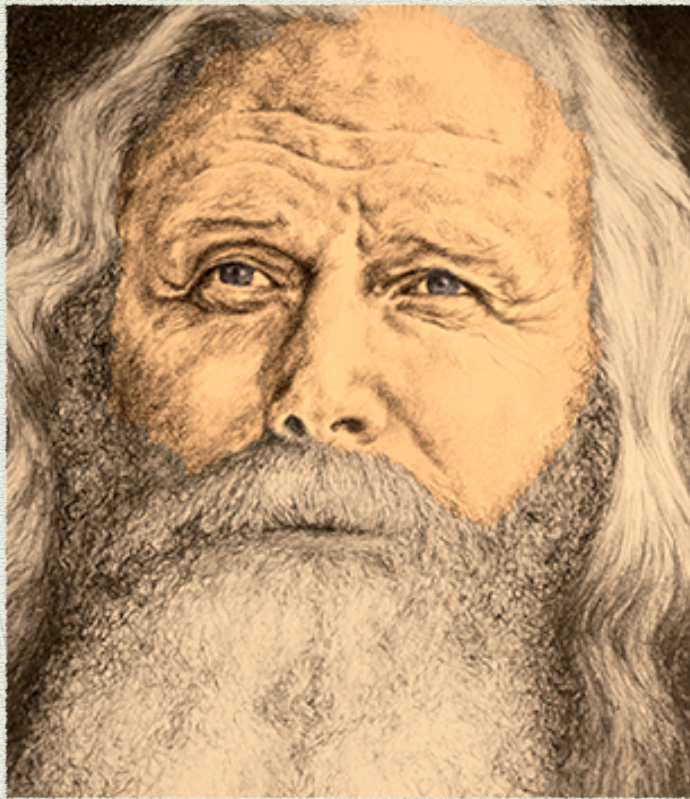
Isa. 9:6-7

“For unto us a Child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulder.  
And His name will be called  
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of His government and peace  
There will be no end,  
**Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,**  
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice  
From that time forward, even forever.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”





# Zechariah



Zec. 2:10-12

“Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold **I am coming and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD.** And many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And the LORD will possess Judah as His portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.”



# David

Psalms 2:7-9

"I will declare the decree:  
the Lord has said to Me,  
You *are* My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.

Ask of Me, and **I will give You**  
**The nations *for* Your inheritance,**  
**And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.**

You shall break them with a rod of iron;  
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's  
vessel.' "





# Jeremiah



Jer. 23:5-6

“Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the Lord,  
“That I will raise to David a Branch of  
righteousness;

**A King shall reign and prosper,  
And execute judgment and righteousness in the  
earth.**

In His days Judah will be saved,  
And Israel will dwell safely;

Now this *is* His name by which He will be called:  
**THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”**



*The point is that there  
are dozens of Old  
Testament prophecies  
that speak of a future  
Kingdom **on Earth**  
ruled by the Messiah  
from Jerusalem.*

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# Amillennialist Floyd Hamilton admits...

*“Now we must frankly admit that a **literal** interpretation of the **Old Testament prophecies** gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures. That was the kind of Messianic kingdom that the Jews of the time of Christ were looking for, on the basis of a **literal** interpretation of the Old Testament promises.”*



# The Teaching of Jesus & the Expectation of the New Testament Disciples

*What did Jesus say about the Kingdom & what did  
the Apostles believe and teach about the Kingdom Age?*



# Jesus

Matt. 19:28

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the **regeneration**, **when the Son of Man sits on the throne** of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”





“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you **in My Father’s kingdom.**”

*—Matthew 26:28-29*

Clearly the Kingdom that Jesus speaks of here is a **future material Kingdom**—not a present spiritual Kingdom for Jesus has yet to sit with His disciples and drink the fruit of the vine!



# Jesus & the Disciples



Acts 1:6-7

“Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time **restore the kingdom to Israel?**”

And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.”

Note: Jesus doesn't say that the Kingdom isn't coming, rather, “not yet”.



# The Testimony of the Early Church Fathers

*100-400 AD*



Papias taught...

“there will be a  
**millennium** after the  
resurrection of the dead,  
when the kingdom of  
Christ will be set up in  
material form **on this  
earth.**”

\*Papias as quoted in *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History*, II vol.,  
(Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1926) Vol I. p.297



\*6 miles from  
Laodicea!  
Papias would  
have read  
the Revelation—  
including  
chapter 20.

Papias  
a contemporary  
of the Apostle John  
Bishop of Hierapolis\*  
A.D. 60~130





Justin Martyr  
A.D. 100-165

Justin considered  
**premillennialism** an test of  
orthodoxy in his day as  
demonstrated in the following...



“But I and others, ***who are right-minded Christians on all points***, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, **and a thousand years in Jerusalem**, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.”\*

\*Justin Martyr *Dialogue With Trypho*, chapter 80



“And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ **would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem**; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place.”\*

\*Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, chapter 81.





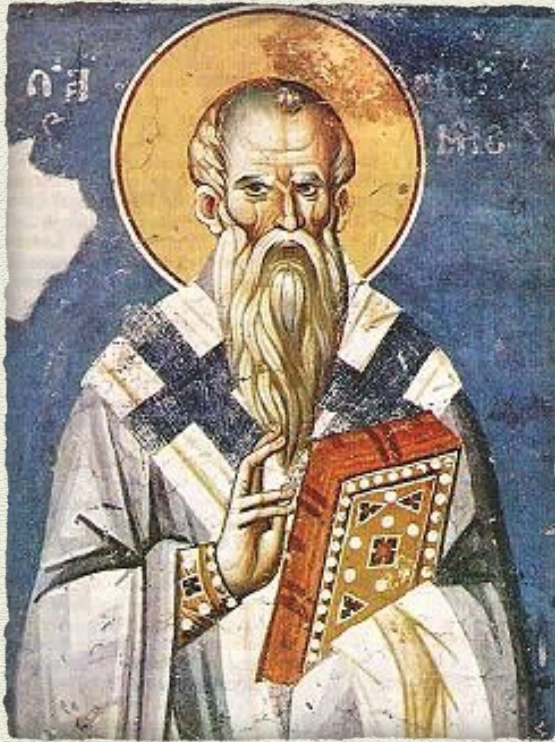
Tertullian  
A.D. 155-240

"But we do confess that **a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth**, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for **a thousand years** in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem, 'letdown from heaven,' which the apostle also calls 'our mother from above;' and, while declaring that our citizenship is in heaven, he predicts of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld."\*

\*Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, book 3 chapter 25.



All premillennialists



Clement of Rome  
A.D. 30-95

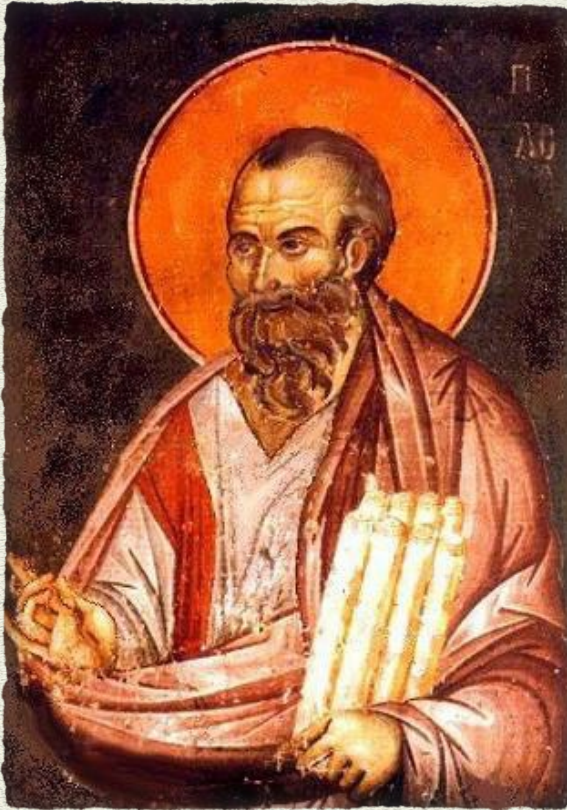


Barnabas  
A.D. ??



The Shepherd of Hermas  
A.D. 140-150





Polycarp  
A.D. 70-155



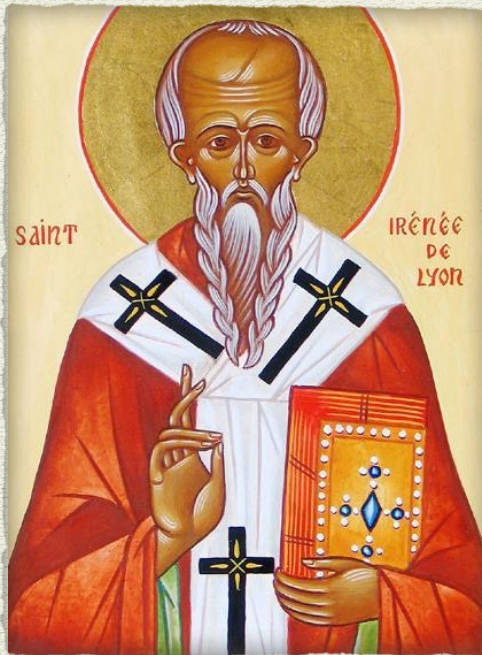
Ignatius  
A.D. 35-107

All premillennialists



Hippolytus  
A.D. 236





Irenaeus  
A.D. 130-202

## All premillennialists



Cyprian of Carthage  
A.D. 195-258



Lactantius  
A.D. 240-320



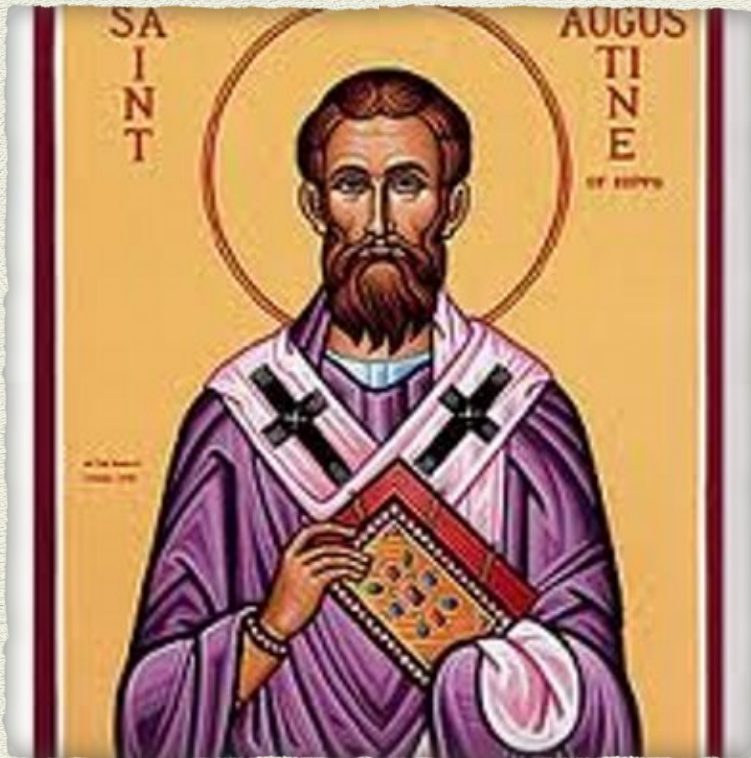
Commodianus  
A.D. 250





*For the first 400 years of the Church the Apostles, their immediate disciples,  
and the Patristics who wrote on the subject were all **Premillennialists**...  
...until*





Augustine  
354~430 A.D.

Augustine couldn't reconcile Jesus' promise...

*"Behold, I come quickly"* ~ Rev. 22:20

with the fact that it had been over 300 years since  
He made that promise.

So, in his seminal work, *The City of God* (426 A.D.), Augustine advanced the idea that believers had misunderstood Jesus' promise to build an earthly kingdom. So rather than looking for a *literal* Millennial Kingdom on Earth over which, Jesus will rule Augustine suggested that Jesus meant that the Kingdom presently existed in a *spiritual* state in the hearts of Believers.

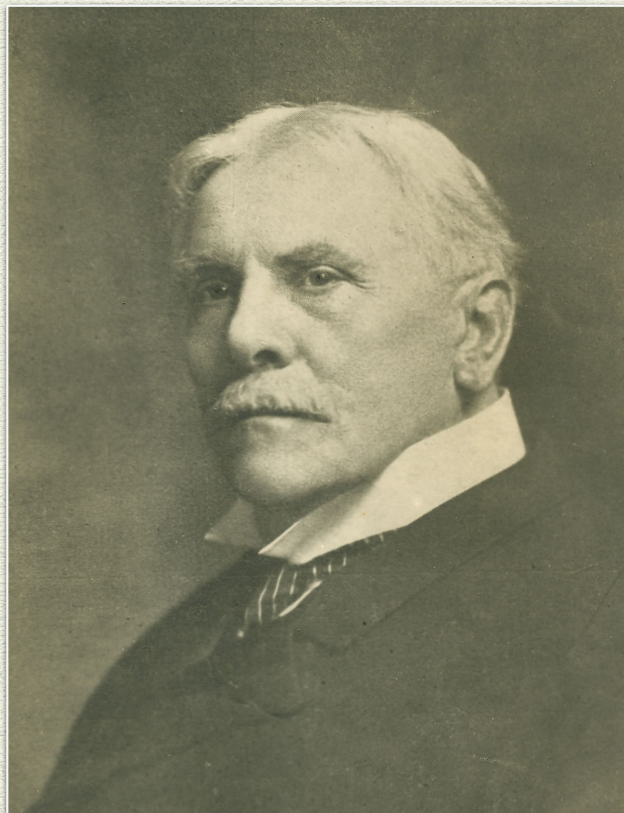
Because he denied a literal Kingdom on earth his view is known as *amillennial* (no millennium).



The *amillennial* view held wide acceptance within the Church until the 17th Century when **Daniel Whitby**, a priest in the Church of England, popularized a new interpretation of the Revelation coined *postmillennialism*. Some have suggested it is the “optimistic little brother of amillennialism.”







Cyrus I. Scofield  
1843-1921 A.D.

The **Premillennial** view began regaining popularity through the teaching ministry of John Nelson Darby of the Plymouth Brethren in the 19th Century. However Nelson's view did not receive enthusiastic support in the US until the C.I. Scofield published his Scofield Reference Bible in the early 20th Century.

Darby & Scofield's view is often called **dispensational premillennialism**.



# Implications

*Your eschatology influences the way you read the Bible & your worldview*



# Hermeneutics

- ◆ Since Amill & Postmill reject a **literal** Kingdom of God on earth...
- ◆ ...they are forced to **allegorize** ALL of the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Kingdom of God!



- ◆ The prophecies in Daniel 2, 7, 11, 12 are **spiritualized**.
- ◆ The prophecies of Ezekiel 40-48 are **spiritualized**.
- ◆ The prophecies of ALL of the Major & Minor Prophets regarding the Kingdom of God are **spiritualized**.
- ◆ All of the promises given to Jesus, the Son of God, are **spiritualized** (ex. Ps. 2 & 89).
- ◆ Everything Jesus said about the coming Kingdom of God on earth is **spiritualized**.



- ◆ The point?
- ◆ The Amill & Postmill models require the believer to abandon good hermeneutics to make their interpretations work!



# Israelology

- ◆ Because the Amill & Postmill interpretations believe that God is finished with Israel they do not believe that the modern nation of Israel is the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.
- ◆ For example...



- ◆ They read the Bible's **literal** land promises made to Israel as being fulfilled **spiritually** by the Church ~ Replacement Theology.
- ◆ Therefore they do not support Israel's right to the Promised Land & deny that the Abrahamic Covenant is still in effect.
- ◆ Therefore they align politically with Arab groups, including terrorist organizations, to work against Israel's security and right to exist.



# Missiology

- ◆ Amill & Postmill advocates believe that Jesus cannot return until the whole world evangelized (a misinterpretation of Mt. 24:14).
- ◆ Therefore they are **not** looking for Jesus' imminent return, nor do they pay attention to the prophetic signs coming to pass in our generation, which is contrary to Jesus' clear exhortation to the Church...
- ◆ *"Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."* Luke 12:40



- ◆ Only the **Premillennial** view believes in the imminent return of Jesus for His Church.
- ◆ Important because a belief in the imminent return of Christ provides the motivation to live a life for Christ and a passion to reach the lost.



- ◆ The Biblical exhortation is that Christians are to live with a hand on the plow and an eye on the sky!

That is, we're to be wise students of Scripture—*looking* for & discerning the signs that Jesus said would precede His return...

And, stay *busy* doing the work to which He has commissioned us until He calls us home.



# Sociology

- ◆ Because **Postmillennial** advocates believe that the Church is building the KOG on earth they invest a lot their energy on social reform & the political process to change the world because they believe they will turn the world into an Eden-like Paradise.
- ◆ While **Premillennialists** see the value of social reform & political involvement they do not put their hope in political solutions because they understand that Jesus said the condition of the world would *get worse ~ not better*.



- ◆ Because **postmillennialists** believe that the Church will bring the KOG into being they are forced to ignore or allegorize scriptures that describe the **condition** of the world at Jesus' return...
- ◆ ...which contradict their views.
- ◆ For example...



- ◆ “As the days of Noah...” ~ Matt. 24:36-44
- ◆ “Two thirds (of the Jewish people in Israel) shall be cut off & die...” ~ Zech. 13:8-9
- ◆ Description of Seal, Trumpet & Bowl Judgments recorded in Rev. 6-19 destroy at least a quarter of the human population & leave the world uninhabitable.
- ◆ Clearly the Bible describes the earth at the time of Jesus’ return as one of great turmoil, wickedness, rebellion & sin with the saints on the run ~ *not* a “Golden Age” as envisioned by postmillennialists.





Postmillennialist  
John Zumwalt

- ♦ “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. **And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved;** but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”

Matt. 24:21-22



“How do you reconcile Jesus’ prediction with your view?”

“I don’t know.”



- ◆ Therefore, you will observe that **Postmillennialists** spend more effort on changing the condition of the *world* than on changing the condition of human hearts.
- ◆ While **Premillennialists** are more concerned with changing the condition of human *hearts* as we recognize that changed hearts lead to changed lives which in turn lead to a better world.



# Eschatology

- ◆ Because Amillennialists and Postmillennialists do not believe that Jesus is returning to establish a Kingdom on earth they tend toward a **Preterist** view...

...that is, they are forced to conclude that the end time prophecies in the Bible were all **fulfilled by 70 A.D.**



- ◆ That **Daniel's** predictions of the Antichrist, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the age were all fulfilled in 70 A.D.
- ◆ That **Jesus'** predictions of the Antichrist, the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the age & **His return** were all fulfilled in 70 A.D. (**full preterism.**)
- ◆ That **Paul's** predictions of the Antichrist & **Jesus' 2nd Advent were fulfilled** in 70 A.D. (**full preterism.**)
- ◆ That **Jesus & Paul's** promise that Jesus would rapture the Church from the earth is not in the Bible.

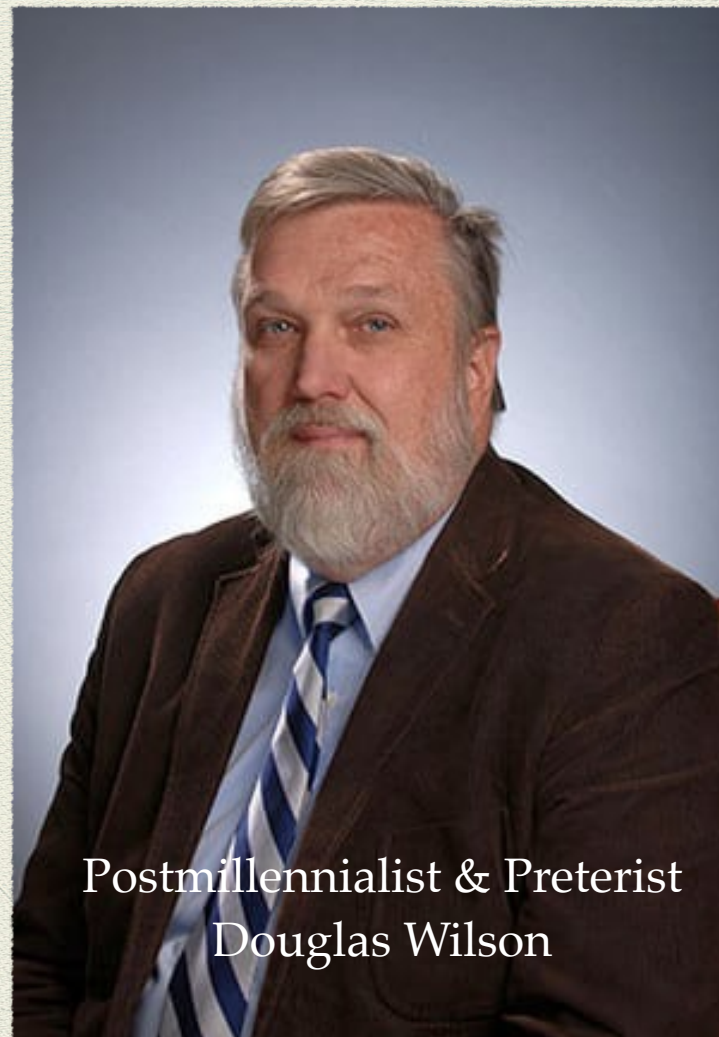


# More Hermeneutic Problems



So Jesus answered and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother [or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold **now in this time**—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in **the age to come**, eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.”

Mark 10:29-31



Postmillennialist & Preterist  
Douglas Wilson



# Question

*What did Jesus mean  
by the “**age to  
come**”?*

*Dr. Wilson says that  
“**we’re living in  
that age now!!**”*





- ◆ Postmillennialists claim that we are now living in the “**age to come**”, which is contrary to the testimony of Scripture.
- ◆ Jesus & His chosen Apostles speak of the “**age to come**” as yet future as demonstrated in the following Scriptures.



“far above all principalities and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in **this age** but also **in that which is to come.**”

—Ephesians 1:21

The Apostle Paul clearly did not believe that he was living in the “**age to come**”.



“raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in **the ages to come** He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ”

—Ephesians 2:6-7

Once again the Apostle Paul clearly did not believe that he was living in the “**age to come**”.



“ For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the **age to come**.”

—Hebrews 6:4-5

The author of Hebrews contrasts the present Christian experience with a different & future **“age to come”**.



# Summary ~ Hermeneutics

- ◆ Only the **Premillennial** view allows for a natural reading of the Biblical text ~ letting the text speak for itself.
- ◆ The **Amillennial** & **Postmillennial** views allegorize huge sections of the Bible, sometimes entire books (like the Revelation), thereby rendering the Bible inscrutable!



- ◆ **Premillennialism** alone allows one to practice good Biblical hermeneutics from Genesis to Revelation ~ as admitted by prominent **Amill** & **Postmill** scholars.



*—Amillennialist Floyd Hamilton admits...*

*“Now we must frankly admit that a **literal** interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies gives us just such a picture of an earthly reign of the Messiah as the premillennialist pictures. That was the kind of Messianic kingdom that the Jews of the time of Christ were looking for, on the basis of a **literal** interpretation of the Old Testament promises.”*



# Amillennialist Abraham Kuyper admits...

*With regard to the reading of Revelation 20*

*“In every other writing the construction of the first ten verses of chapter 20 would require a **literal** interpretation...”*



# Personal

- ◆ Only the **Premillennialist** believes that Jesus could come for His Church today!
- ◆ The **Amillennialist** & **Postmillennialist** believe that the Gospel must be preached to the whole world before Jesus can return.



- ◆ Thus the **Premillennialist** has greater motivation to share the Gospel & to live for Christ today...
- ◆ ...because we believe that Jesus might come back for His people today!



- ◆ Motivation to be a better employee or employer because we want to be found faithful if Jesus comes for us today.
- ◆ Motivation to get after His calling on our lives because we may not have tomorrow.
- ◆ Motivation to live a life of purity because we don't want to be found involved in sin if Jesus comes for us today.
- ◆ Motivation to trust in the work of God's spirit rather than the work of our hands because we know that the Lord will restore the Earth ~ not the Church.



# Post & Amill interpretation of Rev. 20...

- ◆ Because post and amillennialists **reject** a literal reading of a “**thousand years**” in Revelation 20 they are forced to abandon good hermeneutics and apply a very liberal allegorical reading of the text.
- ◆ For example...



“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. **He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;** and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.” ~ Rev. 20:1-3





**Jesus was tempted by the Devil**

**Satan asked that he might  
sift Peter as wheat**

**Peter writes that the Devil  
Seeks to devour us**

During the whole time which this book embraces — that is, from the first coming of Christ to the end of the world, when He shall come the second time — which goes by the name of the **MILLENNIUM** ... the devil is bound throughout the whole period, from the first coming of Christ to the Second Coming. He is not permitted to exert his whole power of temptation, either by force or by guile to seduce people.

*Saint Augustine, The City of God*

Amillennialists & Postmillennialists like **Sam Storms** & **Douglas Wilson** believe that Satan is currently bound!

When pressed for evidence they respond that he is bound in the sense that he “cannot deceive the nations.”



“Then I saw the souls of **those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.** And they lived and reigned with Christ for a **thousand years**. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the **thousand years** were finished. This is the first resurrection.” ~ Rev. 20:4-5



John is  
describing the  
“**born again**”  
experience  
that all  
believers have  
at salvation.





“Then I saw the souls of **those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.** And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”



Rejection of a literal rendering of a  
“**thousand years**” in Rev. 20 has given  
rise to such speculation as to render the  
text inscrutable—some examples...



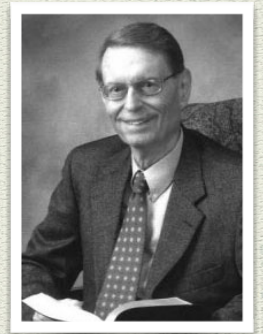
- ♦ **Augustine** ~ a literal 1,000 years that began hundreds of years before the Incarnation and would end when Jesus returned to Earth, which he believed would certainly happen before 1,000 A.D.
- ♦ **Lenski** ~ symbolic of the time from the Incarnation to the Enthronement of the Son to Satan's final plunge into Hell.
- ♦ **Roman Catholic** ~ the period between the 1st to the 2nd Advents.
- ♦ **Grotius** ~ the Millennium began with the Edict of Milan (312 AD) & will conclude at Christ's 2nd Advent.
- ♦ **Storms** & most contemporary proponents ~ the period of the time from Christ's death to His 2nd Advent.
- ♦ So did the Millennium begin before Jesus was born, when He was born, at His death or with the Edit of Milan?



# Problems with Pre-millennialism

- ◆ “Eschatology seems to suffer at the hands both of its friends and foes. Those who play it down usually avoid assigning specific meaning to prophetic texts. Those who play it up often assign too much.”

Charles C. Ryrie



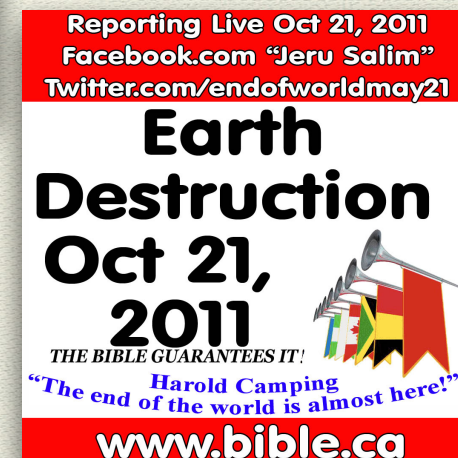
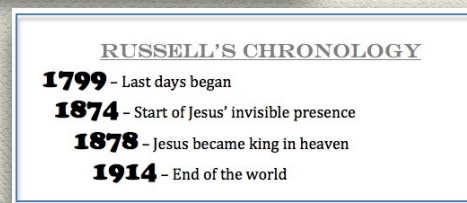
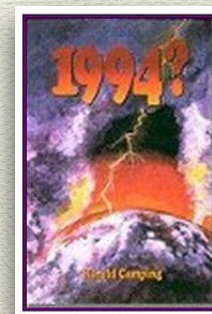
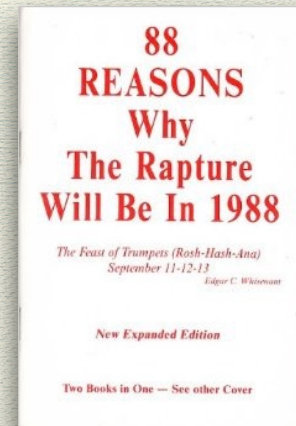
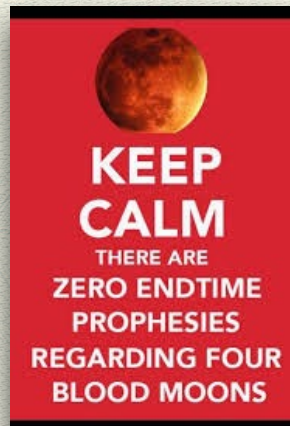


- ◆ Premillennialism\* has suffered a great deal from what one author calls, “*newspaper exegesis*” (or *Youtube exegesis*), or as Ryrie put it, we are guilty of “*assign(ing) too much.*”

That is, well-meaning pre-millennialists throughout the history of the Church have tended to read the prophetic scriptures through the lens of current events.

\*Even postmillennialists like Jonathan Edwards believed that events in Europe & the American Colonies were signs of Jesus' soon return!







- William Miller ~ March 21 1843 to March 21, 1844 & October 22, 1844
- Charles Russell & the Jehovah's Witnesses (Split from the Millerites / 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventists & undisputed champion of false prophecies!)

1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, 1984, 1994

- Edgar Whisenant ~ September, 11, 12, or 13, 1988
- Great White Brotherhood Cult (Kiev, Russia) ~ Nov. 14, 1993
- The Coming Days (Korean cult) ~ the Rapture on September 9, 1991.



- ♦ Harold Camping ~ September 1994 & May 21, 2011 (Rapture), October 21, 2011 (2<sup>nd</sup> Advent)
- ♦ Teacher Chen ~ March 31, 1998
- ♦ Marilyn Agee, in her book, *The End of the Age*, set May 31, 1998 as the date for the Rapture. Meet for May 21 or 22, 1999.
- ♦ Pastor Harry Walther ~ 6/6/2006 (claims he alone can interpret the hidden “Bible code” and that he would reveal the Antichrist in 2006, and that there will be 2 Raptures!
- ♦ Robert Breaker ~ September 23 2017!







- ◆ The Biblical exhortation is that Christians are to live with a hand on the plow and an eye on the sky!

That is, we're to be wise students of Scripture—*looking* for & discerning the signs that Jesus said would precede His return...

But, *busy* doing the work to which He has commissioned us until He calls us home.



# The admonition to pre-millennialists...

- ◆ Be careful not to assign too much Biblical authority to current events.
- ◆ Be wise, look for the signs, be discerning of the signs but don't let every "expert" on Bible prophecy yank your chain.

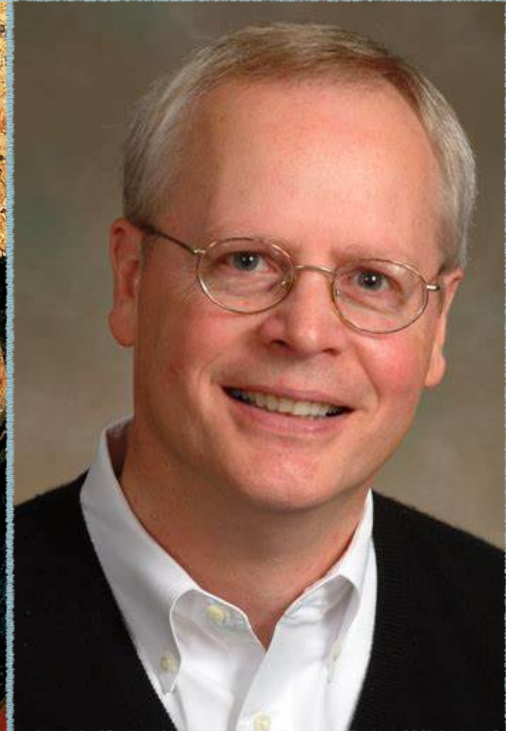
Remember the Blood Moon Prophecies?

Remember Y2K?    The Revelation 12 Sign 2017?

Remember 1988?    SSI numbers are the "Mark of the Beast"?

Remember 1981?    Henry Kissinger is the Antichrist?





# Arguments against the Premillennial view

*Reconciling the Scriptures*



# What about these Scriptures?

- ◆ “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the **kingdom of God** has come upon you.” - Matt. 12:28
- ◆ “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “**The kingdom of God does not come with observation;** nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ **For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.**” - Luke 17:20-21



- ◆ When Pilate asked Jesus whether or not He was a King Jesus said...
- ◆ **“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” - John 18:36**



# Pre-millennial response

- ◆ How do you reconcile those verses with...
- ◆ “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in **the kingdom of God**, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in **the kingdom of God**. And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last.”

Luke 13:28-30



- ◆ “Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”
- ◆ Clearly these Scriptures have in view a different Kingdom reality than what believers experience now.



- ◆ We acknowledge that wherever Jesus is King (like in your heart) the Kingdom of God has come in a spiritual sense.
- ◆ But we also acknowledge that the Kingdom of God has not come in its fullness including the numerous Scriptures that speak of a material Kingdom on earth.
- ◆ Therefore, we conclude that the Kingdom of God is...
- ◆ "Now, and not yet."



# Biblical Evidence for Premillennialism



Bernard Ramm...

*“The ultimate proof that Old Testament prophecies should be taken **literally** and not spiritually (or allegorically) is that of its 113 messianic predictions that Christ has already fulfilled, all were **fulfilled literally**.*

*If the predictions surrounding Christ’s first coming are to be taken **literally**, then by logical extension there is no justification for spiritualizing predictions about His second coming.”*



Bernard Ramm...

*“The rules of hermeneutics  
don’t change when we turn to a new page.”*  
*Premillennialism* is the only one of the three views  
that maintains a consistent hermeneutic from  
Genesis to Revelation.



Merrill Tenney...

*“The futurist school of thought, because of its insistence upon an interpretation as **literal** as possible, has been a healthy antidote to an overbalanced symbolism that has tended to make Revelation mean everything except the obvious.”*



## The Image of Daniel Chapter 2

"Nebuchadnezzar had dreams...  
The secret was revealed to Daniel...  
[God] made known what will be in the latter days."  
(Daniel 2:1, 19, 28)

The Image: Daniel 2:31-33

The head of gold =  
Nebuchadnezzar, king  
of Babylon  
(verses 36-38)

Chest and arms of  
silver = Medo-Persia  
(verse 32; Daniel 5:  
30-31)

Belly of bronze =  
Greece  
(Daniel 2:39; 8:21-22)

Legs of iron = Rome  
(Daniel 2:40)

Feet and toes =  
Strong and weak  
governments of the  
Endtime  
(Daniel 2:41-43)

The Rock  
destroys the  
Image: Daniel 2:  
34-35

The Rock = Jesus  
(Matthew 21:42-44)

The mountain fills the earth  
= The Kingdom of God  
(Daniel 2:44; Micah 4:1)



- Head of Gold ~ **Literally** fulfilled in the Babylonian Empire
- Chest & arms of silver ~ **Literally** fulfilled in the Medo-Persian Empire
- Belly of Bronze ~ **Literally** fulfilled in the Grecian Empire
- Legs of Iron ~ **Literally** fulfilled in the Roman Empire
- Feet & Toes of Iron & Clay ~ will be **literally** fulfilled in a Neo-Roman Empire
- The Stone that becomes a Mountain ~ why wouldn't it be a **literal** Kingdom of God on earth?



# When does the stone of Daniel 2 become a mountain?

- ♦ Isa. 2:2-3 (see also Ps. 68:18; Isa. 11:9; Micah 4:1-2 & Zech. 8:3)

“Now it shall come to pass in *the latter days* that the **mountain of the Lord’s house** Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to **the mountain of the Lord**, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

- ♦ Note the context, the “*latter days*”; always a reference to the End Times in this present age, not the Eternal Age.



# When do the meek inherit the earth?

- “He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall *inherit the earth*.” Ps. 25:13
- “For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, They shall *inherit the earth*.” ~ Ps. 37:9
- “But the meek shall *inherit the earth*, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” ~ Ps. 37:11
- “For *those* blessed by Him shall *inherit the earth*, But *those* cursed by Him shall be cut off.” ~ Ps. 37:22
- “Blessed *are* the meek, For they shall *inherit the earth*.” ~ Matt. 5:5



# Answer the Lord's prayer

- ◆ *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done **on earth** as it is in Heaven"*
- ◆ When does that prayer get answered?

If not during the Millennial reign of Christ **on earth**...then when will the Lord's perfect will be **"done on earth"**?



# Fulfill His promise to His Son

- ◆ Psalm 2
- ◆ Context? The “kings”, “rulers” & “nations of the earth” vs. 2
- ◆ Jesus ruling & reigning over the nations of the earth
- ◆ If there is no Millennial Kingdom then the Father’s promise to His Son is left unfilled ~ Dan. 7/Psa. 132:11/Matt. 25:31-36/Rev. 11:15/Rev. 12:5/Rev. 19:15/1Cor. 15:24-28
- ◆ When Satan offered Jesus the “kingdoms of the world”—was that a **literal** temptation or just an **allegory**?



# Fulfill His Mission

Luke 4:17-21 (ref. Isa. 61)

And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to *the* poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to *the* captives  
And recovery of sight to *the* blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

And He began to say to them, "*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*"



Question: Did Jesus fulfill Isaiah's prophecy *literally*, or *symbolically*?



# Fulfill His Mission

## 1st Advent

Isa. 61

vs. 1

"The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me,  
Because the Lord has anointed Me  
To preach good tidings to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And the opening of the prison to *those who are*  
bound;

vs. 2

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,  
And the day of vengeance of our God;

To comfort all who mourn,

Vs. 3

## 2nd Advent

To console those who mourn in Zion,  
To give them beauty for ashes,  
The oil of joy for mourning,  
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;  
That they may be called trees of righteousness,  
The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

Since Jesus  
fulfilled the  
first part of  
the prophecy  
literally...

...why  
wouldn't He  
fulfill the  
second part  
literally?



# Fulfill His promise to His Apostles

- ◆ Promise to the Apostles

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” ~ Matt. 19:28

- ◆ If there is no Millennial Kingdom then Jesus’ promise to His Apostles is left unfulfilled.



# Fulfill His promise to His faithful followers

- ◆ Promise to the saints

“Do you not know that **the saints will judge the world?** And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?”

1 Cor. 6:2

- ◆ Jesus judges all the wicked at the end of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:11-15)...who then are we going to judge & when?
- ◆ More promises that we will reign on earth ~ Rev. 5:10/Rev. 20:4-6



- ◆ Psalm 89 & 132
- ◆ God promised David that one of his descendants would be the Messiah & would sit on his throne on Mount Zion—even if his descendants failed to keep the covenant!
- ◆ If there is no Millennial Kingdom then God's promise to David & Jesus are left unfulfilled.





# Where? Rev. 5

vs. 8. Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

vs. 9. And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

vs. 10. And have made us kings and priests to our God;

And we shall reign on the earth.”

**Where** is the group that John records singing?

**Who** makes up the group that John records singing?

**Where** will they reign?

**What** does that imply?



In short, if God's promises for a literal Kingdom are not fulfilled it would undermine the foundation of God's word!





◆ “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.” ~ Isa. 55:11

◆ No Kingdom = God’s word would be void!



# Q & A

[paullester@ccmodesto.com](mailto:paullester@ccmodesto.com)

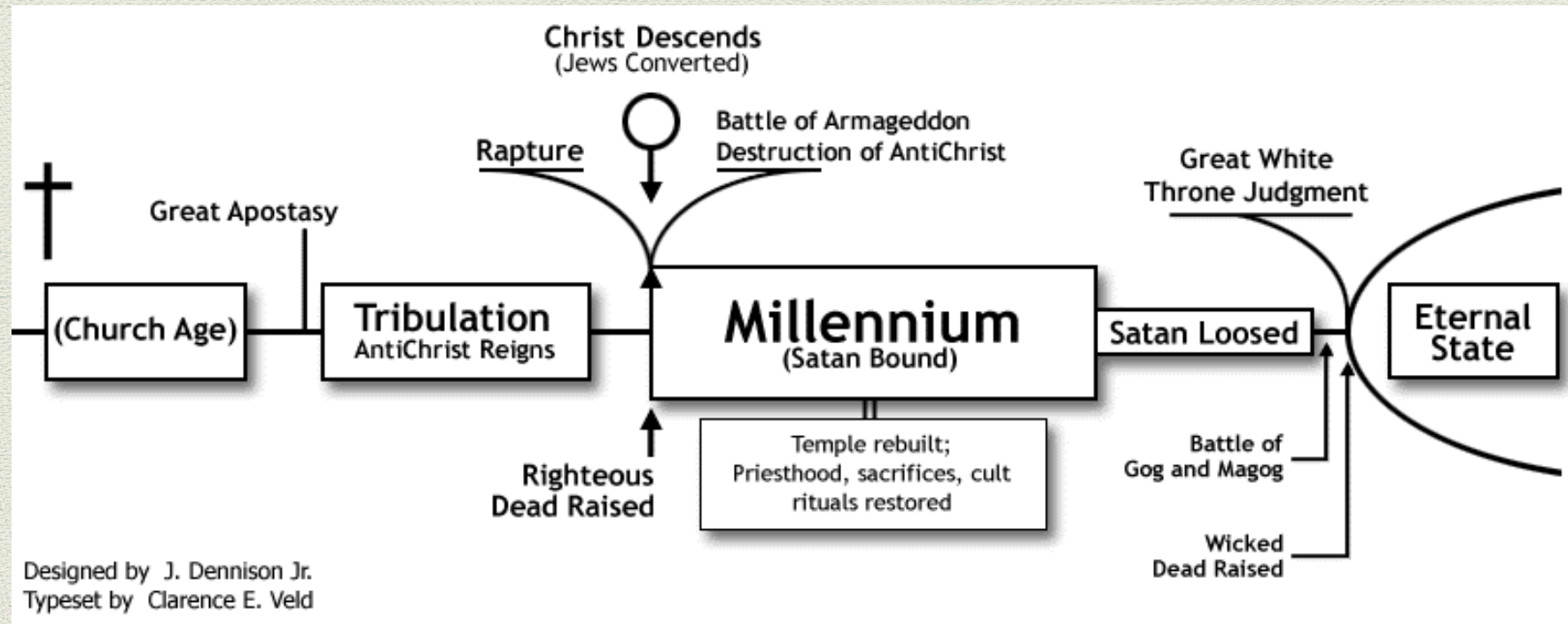


# Resources

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- ♦ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold, *Premillennialism in the Old Testament*, <http://www.ldolphin.org/otpremill.html>
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# Historic Pre-Millennial



## Literal 1,000 Year Kingdom