

# MILLENNIALISM

By

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It would take a large volume to list all the people who have preached that Armageddon and Christ's return would have already happened by the year 2000. Salem Kirban wrote in 1970 that Christ would come for the Rapture in approximately 1989, and that the Millennium would begin in the year 2000.

Jack Van Impe has given various "end time" dates and scenarios, with judgment about to fall in 1976, the tribulation beginning by 1980, chaos in the Sun and the Earth in 1982, the world running out of food by 1984 and finally an end-time date of 1996. Hal Lindsey, in his *Countdown To Armageddon*, had the end set in the 1990s. Pat Robertson had Armageddon pinpointed for 1982. W. S. McBirnie wrote that his study indicated that Jesus would return before 2000 A.D. Edgar Whisenant's book claimed that the Rapture would take place on September 12, 1988, with the Millennium beginning January 2000. Harold Camping sold over 50,000 copies of a book which set September 6, 1994 for the end.

The belief that the Messiah would establish an earthly kingdom and rule the world for a thousand years originated among the Jewish rabbis during the development of the Babylonian Talmud, the traditions which Jesus condemned. (Mk.7:7-8) The popular version is known as "pre-millennial," because it holds that Jesus will return before (pre) the Millennium begins. The term is not from the Bible, but from Latin words — mille = thousand, and annum = year, thus millennium: thousand years. When Jesus made it clear that he did not come to establish their millennial kingdom, the Jews rejected and crucified him.

According to Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book III a heretic by the name of Cerinthus first introduced the doctrine into the church. Eusebius reported that John, the writer of the book of Revelation, refused to bathe in the same bathhouse with Cerinthus, and called him "that enemy of the truth."

About A.D. 255 came Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, who advocated that there would be a certain Millennium of sensual luxury on this earth." (Schaff's History, p.299) According to Schaff "Though Millennialism had been suppressed by the early church, it was nevertheless from time to time revived by heretical sects."

With all the talk of "the Millennium" one would think that it is mentioned on every page of the Bible. The fact is, the only Biblical reference to any such thing as a "millennium" is that found in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, the book of metaphors and symbols. There is no other place in all scripture where there is any allusion to a "millennial" period.

If such a thing as a thousand years of Christ's political rule on earth were to be in the Christian's future, it is unthinkable that Jesus and the apostles never had anything to say about it. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any reference to a "millennial" world order after the return of Jesus. Rather, Jesus and the apostles all taught that at his coming there would be final judgment, leaving only the true believers, who will be made immortal to live in the new creation of God for eternity. They allowed neither time nor place for a thousand year" physical reign on this present earth.

Pre-millennialist often cite passages of scripture in Jeremiah and Ezekiel which foretell the rebuilding of the temple and other things regarding the nation of Israel. But Jeremiah prophesied before the Babylonian captivity and foretold its 70-year duration. Ezekiel also wrote during that time. They referred to the restoration of the temple and city after the captivity", as did Daniel. They were not writing about a time thousands of years hence, and never once mentioned a thousand years."

The establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 by the United Nations is an anchor in pre-mill doctrine, as this is supposed to mean that Israelites are returning to their homeland.

They overlook the fact that over 80% (many say over 95%) of the Jews inhabiting Palestine today are not the descendants of Jacob (Israel), but are Khazars or Askenazis from Eastern Europe. They are unrelated to the "chosen people" of the Old Testament, but adopted Judaism (Talmudic) back in the 7th century, and now use the millennium myth to gain support from Christians for their political agenda. Many have found that there is profit in prophecy, if that prophecy is in favor of Israel. For example, Jerry Falwell, an avid millennialist, boasts that he travels as much as 10,000 miles in a week on a jet worth two and a half to three and a half million dollars, a gift from Israel.

There are many variations on the pre-millennial theme, but they all include the Jewish idea of a culmination of history in a better world - the present temporal world in which material goods are supplied in abundance, all want, crime, and sickness are eliminated, and Jesus will sit on David's throne in Jerusalem to rule over all. This doctrine is a plain denial of the claims of Jesus and the apostles that Jesus already reigns as Lord and King.

One of the great prophecies of the Old Testament foretold the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom and his reign upon the throne of David. The prophecy was repeated at his birth, in Luke 1:32-33. New Testament scriptures declare that this prophecy was fulfilled at Christ's ascension when he "sat down on the right hand of the majesty on High" (Heb. 1:3). God "made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion" (Eph. 20, 21). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter announced that Jesus was the one whom God raised up to sit on David's throne. (Acts 2:29-36. Note also Acts 13:23)

Both John the Baptist and Jesus announced that the Kingdom was at hand, and never suggested that "at hand" meant that it was to come some 2000 years later. (Matt. 4:17 & Mark 1:15) Just before his ascension and coronation, Jesus declared, "All authority has

been given unto me in heaven and on earth.” (Matt 28: 19) That’s why Paul tells us in Col. 1:13, “God has delivered us out of the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His son.” He is not referring to some alleged future millennial reign, because Christ was reigning in Paul’s day, and continues to reign in the midst of his foes and with his people in willing subjection. (Note also Ps. I 10:1-3; Ps. 2:9, Col. 3: 1). John wrote that Jesus “made us to be a kingdom, to be priest unto his God and Father.” (Rev. 1:6) This is Christ’s kingdom of which we are citizens.

Writing of the day of resurrection, Paul said, “But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits; then they that are Christ’s, at his coming. Then the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For, he put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he says, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all” (I Cor. 15:23-28).

One must not insert a period of 1,000 years between the words, “They that are Christ’s at His coming” and “Then the end.” “Then the end” cannot be made to imply a millennium.

According to Paul, Jesus was already reigning and will reign until the day of resurrection and judgment, when death will be abolished. Then the end. This scripture indicates that when Jesus comes again it will be judgment and the destruction of all who deny him (II Thess. 17-10), with life and immortality for all his people in the new and glorious creation, so that “The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

What, than, of the thousand year reign of Revelation}}:4? The number of a thousand signifies completeness. Christ sits in power, now, ruling among His enemies, until they are totally destroyed. At the final triumph the Son of God will end His mediatorial reign and willingly be made subject to the Father that God may be all in all. Remember that God delegated authority to the Son to act on His behalf (John 5:22-23, 26-27). When the Son again becomes subject to the Father it is a confirmation of the success of His entire mission in the world.

It is time to stop looking for a millennium and believe the Old Testament prophecies which are fulfilled in Christ. He is now King of Kings and Lord of Lords. “Wherefore, receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe” (Heb. 12:28).

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