

A COMING GOLDEN AGE OF A THOUSAND YEARS

In relation to the Millennium there are three main approaches to studying prophecy. These are Post-Millennialism, Amillennialism and Pre-millennialism.

1. INTRODUCTION TO POST-MILLENNIALISM

Originated by Daniel Whitby (1638-1726). Main proponents: A.A Hodge and B.B Warfield. It originally proposed a literal 1,000 years but this is now mostly seen as figurative. It is a time during which Christians working with the state convert the whole world before the coming of Christ at which time the resurrection and judgment occur. In its modern American Protestant form there are two main branches: Dominionism and Reconstructionism (Theonomy). Partial Preterism. (Please see STUDY 5) also often applies post-millennialism to its interpretation.

DOMINIONISM

Main proponents: Earl Paulk, Paul Yongli Cho, and possibly Kenneth Copeland and Pat Robertson (both often seen on the ‘God TV’ channels).

Dominionism is exclusively Pentecostal and is linked with the “Latter Rain” movement. It teaches that there are Latter-Day prophets/Apostles who, in Christ Jesus’ absence, rule as if they were him.

It also does not allow for:

- The concept of the rapture (1 Thess. 4:14-17).
- Any further future for Israel (Romans 11:1, 2, 15-27), and so Replacement Theology is appealed to.

RECONSTRUCTIONISM (Theonomy)

Main proponents: Garry DeMarr, Kenneth Gentry and Peter Leithart.

This was developed by R. J. Rushdoony. It advocates that God is working through the Church to ensure the establishment of the theocratic Kingdom on earth by the application of the Mosaic Law. Once accomplished it is the Church’s duty to bind Satan and bring an end to all evil.

POST-MILLENNIALISM’S KEY PROOF TEXT

* “Repent therefore, and turn around that your sins may be blotted out, that **times of refreshing** may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, *whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring* all the things about which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets long ago” (Acts 3:19-21).

Post-Millennialists interpret this as showing that “**times of refreshing**” or “**restoring** all the things” will come first, i.e. as if they will be completed before Christ Jesus returns. This would mean that the Church would hold dominion over the entire world before the return of Christ.

WHY POST-MILLENNIALISM DOES NOT FIT THE BIBLICAL SCHEME

The above interpretation is incorrect because:

1. The text plainly says that Jesus will not return “**until the time for restoring** all the things”—rather than when they have already transpired. Dominionist reading of these words is nonsense e.g. “I will not return until spring” does not mean “I will return when spring is over.”

2. The crooked and twisted generation that is evil comes to an end long before the whole world is converted and peace reigns. This generation is part of “this present evil age” and:

- ❖ “...this generation will **not pass away until** all these things take place” (Matt. 24:34)
- ❖ “As were the days of Noah, so will be **the coming of the Son of Man**. For as in those days before the flood...they were unaware until the flood came and **swept them all away**, so will be the coming of the Son of man” (Matt. 24:37).

Why would God’s judgement come upon a fully converted Christianized world?

3. Christians are persecuted right up to the time Christ returns.

- ❖ “...your steadfastness and faith in all **your persecutions** and in the afflictions you are enduring. This is evidence of the righteous judgement of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God ... to grant **relief to you** who are afflicted as well as to us, *when the Lord Jesus is revealed* from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God...” (2 Thess. 1:4-8).

4. Christians cannot be glorified before the return of Jesus as Dominionist claim:

- ❖ “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves ... Beloved, we are God’s children now, and **what we will be has not yet appeared**; but we know that **when he appears we shall be like him**, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 1:8, 3:2).

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2. INTRODUCTION TO AMILLENNIALISM

AUGUSTINIAN AMILLENNIALISM

This involves a real period of time but with uncertainty regarding the literalness or figurativeness of the number. It is set in *the present age* between the two advents of Christ and referring to the course of the church ruling on earth. The 1st resurrection was seen as spiritual i.e. regeneration of the individual. The 2nd resurrection is to be physical. This has traditionally been the Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed position.

MODERN AMILLENNIALISM (Modified Augustinianism)

Main proponent: Hendricksen

The 1,000 years is taken to be figurative of the present age up to Christ’s return. The reign of the saints is seen as in heaven.

MODERN AMILLENNIALISM (Consistent Preterist school—see Study 4)

Main proponent: Henry Barclay Swete (1907).

The 1,000 years is taken to be figurative signifying a great epoch in human history. It is similar to post-millennialism except that the binding of Satan and the resurrection are in the past.

All these views reject the thought of a future reign on earth of Christ lasting 1,000 years.

WHY AMILLENNIALISM DOES NOT FIT THE
BIBLICAL SCHEME

The tangible reign of Christ and the holy ones clearly lies in the future. One cannot have a reign already in progress, as in Amillennialism, before the 2nd coming when the reign begins.

- The reign of Christ and the holy ones can only occur after the literal resurrection of the holy ones—the first resurrection. This must be yet future.
- Amillennialists must turn the first resurrection of Revelation 20:4 into a ‘spiritual resurrection’ instead of the literal resurrection that all biblical resurrections are shown to be including the “coming to life of the rest of the dead’ in verse 5.

IMPOSSIBLE SIMULTANEITY

- ❖ “...the great dragon [Satan] was thrown down, who **deceives the whole world**” (Rev.12:9).
- ❖ “...an angel...threw him [Satan] into the abyss...so that he would **deceive the nations no longer**” (Rev. 20:3).

Both situations cannot exist simultaneously as in Amillennialism.

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- ❖ “...the devil has come down to you...knowing that he has only a short time ... he persecuted the woman” (Rev. 12:12, 13).
- ❖ “...an angel ... laid hold of the dragon [Satan], and **bound him** for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:1-2).
Satan cannot be simultaneously active on earth and yet be bound.

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- ❖ “...the beast...and with him the false prophet...were thrown alive into the Lake of fire” (Rev. 19:20)
This occurs at the battle for Jerusalem when Christ returns.
- ❖ “When the thousand years were completed the devil ... was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were” (Rev. 20: 7, 10).

Satan is cast into the lake of fire at the final battle which is after the 1,000 years. Yet the beast and the false prophet were already there, having been thrown alive into the lake a thousand years earlier. If the 1,000 years is figurative when could these events happen?

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3. INTRODUCTION TO PRE-MILLENNIALISM

The 1,000 years in Revelation are viewed as literal. Jesus returns before the Millennium begins. Pre-Millennialism has three primary forms:

A. CLASSICAL FUTURIST PRE-MILLENNIALISM

This was the belief of the Apostolic Fathers: Irenaeus, Justin martyr and Papias.

Main modern-day proponents: George Eldon Ladd, Henry Alford, Robert Gundry, Theodore Zahn and Fuller Theological College.

In this scheme Christians experience the persecution of the “Great tribulation” and relief comes when Jesus returns immediately before the Millennium. Jesus returns **only once** at which time the first resurrection occurs (post-tribulation). The rapture is only into the earth’s atmosphere for a short period as Jesus continues his descent to earth at which time he begins his judgment of the world.

B. DISPENSATIONAL FUTURIST PRE-MILLENNIALISM

This belief came into existence in 1830 as a result of **Margaret MacDonald's** visions of a pre-tribulation rapture. **Edward Irving** developed the concept into Dispensationalism. It was then popularized by **J.N Darby** the founder of the Plymouth Brethren and became systematized in the Scofield Reference Bible of 1909 and more recently in the Ryrie Study Bible.

Main proponents: John Valvoord, Charles Ryrie, Dwight Pentecost and Dallas Theological College.

In this scheme God has **two redemptive plans**—one for national Israel and one for the Church during the “church age.” Furthermore, Jesus *returns twice*. The first is a secret return 7 years before the Millennium. At this time the first resurrection and the rapture occur with the Christians being taken away to heaven for 7 years (The pre-tribulation rapture). The persecution during the “Great Tribulation” is avoided. The second return is a physical one to bring about judgment on the world. Please see STUDIES 12 to 16 to examine why this is **an unbiblical scheme**.

C. HISTORICISM.

There are many branches and variations of Historicism some of which are also pre-millennial. Historicism will be examined in STUDY 3 showing that in all its versions it, too, is **an unbiblical scheme**.

WHY CLASSICAL PRE-MILLENNIALISM SUCCEEDS

A LITERAL 1,000 YEAR PERIOD

A literal period of time is proved by all the above reasons given for the failure of Amillennialism. Concerning the 1,000 years Henry Alford states that:

The whole Church for three hundred years understood them in the **plain literal sense**.

FROM REVELATION 19 AND 20 THE MILLENNIUM CAN BE SEEN TO BE:

- the period of time between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust.
- the period of Satan's imprisonment.
- the period beginning with the visible return of Christ in glory to judge and rule the nations.
- the period during which the holy ones of the first resurrection reign with Christ.
- the initial stage of the everlasting kingdom of Christ.
- the period which closes with the final eradication of all evil prior to the Great White Throne judgment of the dead.

NOTE: Many other prophecies, in particular the Olivet Discourse and Daniel's visions and other chapters of Revelation, also corroborate this scenario. However, the time element in prophecy is not always evident in the visions of the OT prophets because time cannot be put into picture form. So the various parts of a prophecy may be fulfilled at greatly varying times e.g. Isaiah 61 and Micah 5. This is because the OT prophecies did not make it clear that there would be two advents of Messiah, one of suffering and one of glory.

THE AGE TO COME

Evidently there are **two ages**. The first resurrection occurs at the beginning of the ‘age to come.’

- ❖ “in this age or the *age to come*” (**Matt. 12:32**).
- ❖ “and in the *age to come*—everlasting (aionian) life” (**Mark 10:30**).
- ❖ “and have tasted...the powers of the *age to come*” (**Heb. 6:5**).
- ❖ “those who attain to *that age* and the resurrection” (**Luke 20:35**).

THE MILLENNIUM BEGINS WITH THE RETURN OF CHRIST

- ❖ “I have **set my king upon Zion** my holy hill...I will make the nations you heritage, and the ends of **the earth your possession**. You shall break them [*the nations*] with a rod of iron” (**Psalms 2:6, 9**).

- ❖ “When the Son of Man **comes** in his glory [*kingdom*], and all the angels with him...he will separate people...” (Matt. 25:31).

Isaiah 11 describes how the “*shoot from the stump of Jesse*” has the spirit of Yahweh for judging and has therefore returned. **Then** the Millennium conditions occur i.e.: “the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and ... they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.”

Joel places:

- ❖ “...that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills will flow with milk” **after** “the day of Yahweh” **when** “the sun and the moon are darkened...and Yahweh roars from Zion”
(Joel 3:18, 14-16).

Zechariah places:

- ❖ “...the day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem...and Yahweh will be king over the earth” **after the battle against Jerusalem** (Zech. 14:8, 9, 2).

THE MILLENNIUM IS A TRANSITIONAL ‘NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH’

- ❖ “Then I saw thrones and seated on them were those to whom the authority of judgement was committed ... They came to life and reigned with Christ **a thousand years** ... they will be priests of God and of Christ and they will reign with him for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6 ESV).
- ❖ “New Heavens and New Earth ... I create Jerusalem for rejoicing ... For the youth **will die** at the age of one hundred and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought accursed”
(Isa. 65:17, 18, 20b).

So, alongside the immortal rulers, this **initial stage** is populated with mortals. In contrast to this, at the post-millennium later stage ‘*new Heavens and new Earth*’ there is no death:

- ❖ “Then I saw a new Heavens and a new Earth ... and there will **no longer be any death**”
(Rev. 21: 1, 4).

It is evident that the 1,000 year rule of Christ is only a partial manifestation of the kingdom.

SATAN REMOVED

- ❖ “...he [*the angel*] seized...Satan and bound him for a thousand years ... they [*of the 1st resurrection*] came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years” (Rev. 20:2, 4).

CONDITIONS DURING THE MILLENNIUM

GOD’S RULE IS ESTABLISHED

- ❖ “...in the last days” (*the days of Messiah in a millennial setting as shown by verse 2*) “the mountain of the house of Yahweh will be established as the chief of the mountains” (Isa. 2:2).

This is also shown by the parallel account:

- ❖ “...in the last days ... Each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid” (Mic. 4:1-4).

THE KINGDOM IS EVERLASTING

- ❖ “...he will reign over the house of Jacob *forever*, and his kingdom **will have no end**” (Luke 1:32).
- ❖ “...his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall *not pass away*, and his kingdom one that shall **not be destroyed**” (Dan. 7:14b).
- ❖ “...the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, **for ever and ever**” (Dan. 7:18),

Immediately after the battle of Jerusalem, as described in Zechariah chapters 12 and 14 and Revelation 19:11-21, and the binding of Satan, the first resurrection takes place of those who then begin to reign with Christ. This begins the Millennium which must therefore be the first stage of the everlasting kingdom.

THE WICKED ARE REMOVED

❖ "...the wicked will be no more" (**Ps. 37:10**).

This does not mean people who are imperfect and are not yet Christians, but rather it refers to the incorrigibly wicked who totally resist and oppose the setting up of God's kingdom.

PROSPERITY

❖ "...abundance of grain" (**Ps. 72:16**) and

❖ "...a lavish banquet for all the peoples" (**Isa. 25:6**).

PEACE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

❖ "...the righteous will flourish, and abundance of peace" (**Ps. 72: 7**).

❖ 'wolf/ lamb; leopard/young goat; calf/young lion; cow/bear; a little boy will lead them'

(**Isa. 11:6-9**).

PARADISE ON EARTH

❖ "And God planted a **paradeison** (garden) eastward in Eden" (**Gen. 2:8**).

The Septuagint translates garden as paradeisos. (See also Genesis 2:9; 2:10; 2:15 and 3:2).

❖ "...remember me when you come into your kingdom!" He [*Jesus*] said to him, "truly I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise"" (**Luke 23:42, 43**).

❖ "To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life in **the paradise** of God" (**Rev. 2:7**).

❖ "...a man was caught up to the third heaven ... was caught up into **paradise**" (**2 Cor. 12:2, 4**).

This is the 3rd heavens and earth that Peter described in 2 Peter 3:5, 7 and 13 as "new heavens and a new earth."

Therefore, there is not a separate paradise in heaven. There is only an earthly paradise where Jesus will be along with the resurrected criminal and where faithful ones may eat of the tree of life.

NON-CHRISTIAN MORTALS SURVIVING INTO THE MILLENNIUM

THERE WILL BE MORTAL NATIONS IN THE MILLENNIUM

❖ "...no longer the voice of weeping ... no longer an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days (***natural death of mortals at very old ages still occurs in this quasi paradise***); for the youth will die at the age of a hundred and the one who does not reach the age of a hundred will be thought of as accursed. They will build houses...plant vineyards ... for as the lifetime of a tree so will be the days of my people" (**Isa. 65:19-25**).

❖ "In that day **Israel** will be a third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be **Egypt my people**, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance'" (**Isa. 19:24, 25**).

❖ "...for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed...And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD...to be his servants, everyone who keeps the sabbath...these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer [*the Millennial temple Ezek 40-44*]; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices [*in commemoration of Messiah's redemption*] will be accepted on my altar" (**Isa. 56:1, 6-8**).

- ❖ “After this, all **the survivors of all the nations** which have attacked Jerusalem will come up year after year *to worship the king, Yahweh Sabaoth*” (**Zech. 14:16** NJB).

Such survivors cannot be Christians because the possibility is presented that some of them refuse to “go up to Jerusalem to worship the King” and will receive “*the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.*”

REPENTING NON-CHRISTIAN GENTILES AT ARMAGEDDON

- ❖ “*The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might ... they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God*” (**Mic. 7:16, 17**).

Scripturally the terms *nations* and *tribes of the earth* are never used to refer to Christians although they are “*purchased...from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.*”

- ❖ “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened...the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then *all the tribes of the earth will mourn...*” (**Matt. 24:30**).
- ❖ “Behold he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and *all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him*” (**Rev. 1:7**).
- ❖ “So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of *many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD*” (**Ezek. 38:23**).

This is after the Armageddon scenario of verses 16ff. So if these nations are only from then on to “*know that I am the LORD*” then they cannot be Christians prior to the Millennium.

THE RESTORATION OF A REMNANT OF ISRAEL

- ❖ “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that **when they look on me**, on him whom they have pierced, **they shall mourn for him**...*On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo*” (**Zech. 12:10, 11**).
- ❖ “Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek Yahweh their God, and David their king, and they **shall come in fear to Yahweh** and to his goodness *in the latter days*” (**Hos. 3:5**).
- ❖ “...these bones are the whole house of Israel ... I will place you in your own land”
(**Ezek. 37:11, 14**).
- ❖ “Jacob shall **return** and have full ease ... I will make a full end of all the nations among which I scattered you, but of you **I will not make a full end**” (**Jer. 30:10, 11**).
- ❖ “In that day Yahweh will extend his hand yet **a second time** to recover **the remnant** that remains of his people” (**Isa. 11:11**).

The first time was from ancient Babylon.

- ❖ “I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities ... I will plant them on their land and they shall never again be uprooted out of the land that I have given them” (**Amos 9:14, 15**).

This is not to imply that all Jews will accept Christ; yet the Scriptures direct our attention to an end-time Jewish remnant that will turn to him. For a full discussion please see Volume 4 STUDY 9. ‘DOES ISRAEL HAVE A FUTURE IN GOD’S PURPOSE?’

DOES 2 THESSALONIANS 1:6-10 PROVE THAT ALL SURVIVORS INTO THE MILLENNIUM MUST BE CHRISTIANS?

- ❖ "...since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction **those who afflict you** ... when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out *retribution* to **those who do not know** (*acknowledge*) **God** and to **those who do not obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of **eternal destruction** away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day..."

This passage refers to the coming Great Tribulation. If these words applied to all unsaved men then there would be no one to live in natural mortal bodies during the Millennium for the propagation of the human race. However, just as when Genesis 6:17 spoke of the destruction of *all flesh* as evidently being in a limited sense, so too, the end-times retribution will be limited to "*those who afflict you*" (verse 6).

The phrase "*those who do not know God*" means that they do not acknowledge God when he sends Jesus. The phrase "*those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus*" means that they directly oppose Jesus by resisting the incoming Kingdom. Many will not resist this yet will not be Christians at that time. This is shown in **Zechariah 14:16**:

- ❖ "...any who are **left of all the nations** that went against Jerusalem."
- ❖ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory...**All the nations** will be gathered before him"
(**Matt. 25:31**).

NOT OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

- ❖ "If anyone suffers as a **Christian** ... For it is time for the judgement to begin at the **household of God**; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for **those who do not obey the gospel of God?**" (1 Pet. 4:16, 17).

Because these repenting mortals are not of the household of God they cannot be classed as Christians.

DOES 2 PETER 3:10, 13 REFER TO THE MILLENNIUM OR TO AFTER THE MILLENNIUM?

- ❖ "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens **will pass away** with a mighty roar, and the **elements will be dissolved by fire**, and the earth and everything done on it *will be found out* ... But according to his promise we await *new heavens and a new earth* in which righteousness dwells" (NAB).

The 'new heavens and a new earth' in Peter is a reference to the promise in Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22 and therefore begins with the Millennium: "*For behold I create new heavens and a new earth*" (**Isa. 65:17**). Then follows a description of Millennial conditions showing that the earth will be regenerated and purified very early on in the Millennial Kingdom. It is the prophets in the Hebrew Scriptures who declare that the judgment by fire will immediately precede the establishment of the future Messianic Kingdom:

- ❖ "I will set forth wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and **fire**, and columns of smoke...Before the great and awful day of Yahweh" (**Joel 2:30, 31** Rotherham).
- ❖ "And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His Temple ... But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's **fire** and like fuller's soap" (**Mal. 3:1-3**).

- ❖ “For behold the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will **set them ablaze**” (Mal. 4:1).

NT writers also place the judgment of fire at the inception of the kingdom:

- ❖ “...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in **flaming fire**, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).
- ❖ “The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men **with fire**” (Rev. 16:8).
- ❖ “Yet **once more** I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven” (Heb. 12:26)

Therefore, the recreated earth cannot be shaken again at the end of the Millennium.

The immediate context is that of the **promise** of Christ’s parousia in 2 Peter 3: 4. Then verse 10 says: “The Lord is not slow about his **promise.**” The phrase “*in which the heavens will pass away*” in verse 10 does not mean annihilation but rather to pass from one position in time or space to another. This also applies to Revelation 21:1. The heavens and earth will always remain according to Psalm 104:5, Jeremiah 31:35, Psalm 148:36, Psalm 89:34-37.

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