

# Millennium

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[The Millennium, 1. What it is...2. Where it comes from...3. Its present status...]

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The topic of which this essay is to treat is simply called the millenium, or, if you will, chiliasm. The former name comes from the Latin words mille and annus, meaning "thousand" and "year" respectively. Chiliasm is derived from the Greek, χίλιοι, again meaning a thousand. In some instances the term millenium is used to refer to time immediately after Christ, or some Golden Age in the past, while chiliasm then refers to those who are looking for the thousand years in the future. Nevertheless, the two terms can be and are used interchangeably.

While this paper is designated simply to treat the subject of millennialism, yet the treatment itself is not so simple. The study of this one topic leads into others, and overlaps upon still others. Therefore, let us begin by looking first at what millennialism is. In plain language, it teaches a golden age of a thousand years, during which Christ shall reign with His selected few upon this earth. Satan shall have been bound, the Antichrist revealed, the Church shall prosper, and many heathen shall be converted.

Holy Scripture teaches a three-fold Kingdom of God, as we have learned from the days of our catechetical instructions. These are the Kingdoms of Power, Grace and Glory. The first of these refers to God's work of Creation and Preservation. The second and third, the Kingdoms of Grace and Glory, deal specifically with the Church, the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant. However, when men confuse these last two kingdoms, and force their own interpretations upon the divine Word, then mistaken views such as millennialism soon rear their ugly heads. And since there are so many in this world who look forward to the millenium, it now becomes wise if not necessary for us to discuss it.

The advocates of a millenium actually precede the coming of Christ as the Babe in the manger at Bethlehem. The term of millennialism was not yet used, but the teachings were along the same lines. Present day chiliasm is actually an inheritance from Jewish thought. At the time of Christ, the conception of the Messianic Kingdom had grown to be very materialistic, as is shown by the oft-repeated question put forth to Jesus, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" These Jews raised their question upon a misapplication of the Messianic kingdom and a literal interpretation of certain prophetic figures. They expected the Messiah to be an earthly sovereign, and dreamed that the Jews, as His favored subjects, would eventually dominate the world, and thus bless all the other nations in it. The Messiah for whom they looked was the one who would usher in this era of Jewish supremacy, and raise them to the heights of bliss here in this world. Jesus, however, was just the opposite of the type of Messiah for which the Jews were looking and longing, and so they crucified Him and have rejected Him ever since. It is significant to note that Jesus never used the title "Messiah" for Himself during His ministry among the Jews because of this meaning which they had given it. Rather, He used the term "Son of man," to which no such national, political or earthly notions could be attached.

No doubt the Jews looked to such passages as the following for their ideas. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it (Mt. Zion in Jerusalem). And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:2-4). Another favorite passage of theirs is Isaiah 11:6-9, which reads, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones

shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Zechariah's words in 9:9-10 are very appealing to the millennialist, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

Present day chiliasts still warn us that we must accept these statements as to the great peace ruling on Zion, locally in Jerusalem, when God shall gather all the Jews there! According to them, this millennial restoration of Israel is to begin with a gathering of the ten lost and scattered tribes after they have been purified. When these are united with the two tribes of Judah, Israel will once again become one nation. The Lord will make a new covenant with His people, which involves complete forgiveness and remembering their sin no more. Punishment will be laid upon all enemies; Gog and his armies shall be overthrown and destroyed. The Israelites will come into full possession of their entire kingdom, including the desert, which shall "blossom as the rose." The Temple and city will be rebuilt according to a divine plan. Levitical worship and sacrifices are to be reestablished in a somewhat modified form. Irenaeus claims to have received this description from Papias, who in turn claimed that it came from Jesus:

There will come days in which grapevines will grow which will each have 10,000 main branches, and on each main branch 10,000 smaller branches, and on each smaller branch 10,000 twigs, and on each twig 10 clusters, and on every cluster 10,000 berries, and every berry, when pressed, will yield five measures of wine. And when one of the saints takes a berry, another berry will cry: 'I am a better berry, take me, and thank the Lord through me!' Similarly, the wheat kernel will produce 10,000 ears. And each ear will contain 10,000 kernels, and each kernel will furnish five double-pound measures of fine, pure bisquet flour, and all other tree fruits and seeds and herbs according to the measure suitable for them. And all the animals which use the food which the earth supplies will be peaceful and friendly in perfect obedience subject to man. (Lenski, p. 571)

The Old Testament passages quoted above together with others are misunderstood or misapplied to support the millenium. They don't speak of a visible, earthly kingdom, of external growth, nor of any flourishing within the Jewish Church. They speak in figurative language to describe the spiritual nature and condition of the New Testament Church, as will be pointed out later.

The expectation of an early return of Christ and an earthly kingdom was strong in the early Church. Yet chiliasm was never considered as an article of faith by the Roman Catholics, since they found no reference in Scriptures or Apostolic tradition. However, some of their early writers held millennial tendencies because they insisted on a literal translation of certain Old Testament passages, and especially the Apocalypse. As an example of how they dealt with chiliasts, we read that the Roman Catholic Church has labeled the Gnostic, Cerinthus, a heretic, because his millennial views led him to believe in an earthly, sensual paradise.

The Montanists held to a visionary millenarianism, founded on the Apocalypse and on the apostolic expectation of a speedy return of Christ. This yearning was of such a nature that it overshadowed the importance of the Holy Christian Church on earth. They had little or no zeal for its organization. When they prayed, "Thy kingdom come," they prayed for the end of the world.

Chiliasm, or millennialism, was prominent in the ante-Nicene Church. There was wide spread belief in a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years. This is to take place before the general resurrection and judgment. This doctrine was not embodied in any creed of the Church, or in some form of devotion, nevertheless it was a general opinion of such distinguished leaders as Barnabas, Papias, Justin

Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Kethodius and Lactantius. It was opposed Caius, Origen, Dionysius the Great, Eusebius, and later Jerome and Augustine.

The framers of the Augsburg Confession had to deal with the Anabaptists because they were convinced that they had to take up arms and overthrow their oppressors, and thus make preparations for the millenium. The Confession is worded in such a fashion that Lutherans are cleared of such fanatical opinions.

Of Christ's Return To Judgment. Also they teach that at the Consumation of the World Christ will appear for judgment, and will raise up all the dead; He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils He will condemn to be tormented without end. They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils. They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.  
(Augsburg Confession, Article XVII; Concordia Triglotta, p.51)

The American revival of chiliasm has made this the prominent doctrine in the Seventh Day Adventist and Russellite bodies. Furthermore, it has captivated a great portion of the movement in the visible church which is known as Fundamentalism. American millennialists have introduced a new terminology, "dispensationalism," which is supposedly a proper description of their modified millennialism. C. I. Schofield, the editor of the Schofield Reference Bible, comments in a note to Genesis 1:28 that a dispensation is a "period of time during which man is tested in respect to some specific revelation of the will of God." He divides earth's history into seven dispensations as follows: 1. Innocence - Adam and Eve; 2. Expulsion from Eden; 3. Flood to Call of Abraham; 4. Call of Abraham to the Giving of the Law (Government); 5. Exodus to Crucifixion; 6. Grace; and 7. Millenium. Another dispensationalist, Wm. E. Blackstone, gives a more chronological division: 1. Eden, Innocence Terminating in Expulsion from Eden; 2. Antediluvian, Freedom (Conscience only restraint); 3. Postdiluvian, Government to Sodom; 4. Patriarchal, Sojourners to overthrow of Egypt after Israel's Bondage; 5. Mosaic-Israelitish - to Crucifixion and destruction of Jerusalem; 6. Christian, Mystery - Terminating in Great Tribulation, World's population greatly reduced; and, 7. The Millenium, Earthly exaltation and glory for the Jewish race.

We have already mentioned the three Kingdoms of God. Chiliasts would have yet another one which they assign to Christ here on this earth. It is a hybrid of the Kingdoms of Grace and Glory, resulting in that which is entirely the product of man's fancy, a dangerous doctrine which diverts man's hope of heaven to some illusion of glory to be had here on earth. Not here upon earth, but "Our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20). To that end Jesus prays, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me" (John 17:24).

Let us now turn to a more detailed description of this "fourth" kingdom, and show how it is not only imaginary, but also very dangerous in that it seeks to pervert true Christian faith.

First of all, we must know that millennialists vary greatly in their teachings. They cannot agree among themselves over the character and details of the millenium. We can first make a general division into two groups, premillennialists and post millennialists. The premillennialists teach that Christ will come visibly either before or at the beginning of the millenium. The saints will arise and reign with Christ for a thousand years. During this time, Satan will be bound, wickedness will be repressed, righteousness and peace will prevail on this earth. All of the Jews will be converted, and many others will also turn to the Lord. Then, after the thousand years, Satan will be set free, or loosed, for a little while. He and all his evil followers will wage a bitter war against the saints. However, just when the tribulations reach a terrible peak, Jesus will appear to judge the world. Then the rest of the dead shall rise (second resurrection). Satan, all the evil angels, and all the wicked will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, namely, hell! The earth will then be renewed and become heaven. The postmillennialists, on the other hand, believe that Christ will return after the millenium. For a thousand years, or for some period of time, long and indefinite, the Church will dominate over this world, and

flourish in it. The Gospel will be preached to every nation; it will influence every social, commercial, political and international aspect of life. Israel will be converted, and large numbers from among Gentile nations shall join the Church. Following this almost universal acceptance of Christ will be an almost universal falling away from the faith. All the evil forces (represented as Gog and Magog) will gather to destroy the beloved city of Jerusalem, but they will fail, for the Lord will suddenly come to judge the quick and the dead.

One notices immediately that premillennialists teach a three-fold coming of Christ, whereas the Bible knows of only two. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). Millennialists teach a first and second resurrection, Christ tells us that He will raise the believers at the last day. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Can there be a second resurrection (of the unjust) after "the last day"? Indeed not, for Jesus also says, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). The words of Paul to Timothy read (II 4:1) "The Lord Jesus Christ ...shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom," Paul writes in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (II 4:16-17). The premillennialists would like to use this phrase, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," to give credence to their doctrine. Yet if they would only read what Paul is saying, they would then realize that he makes no reference at all to a premillennial resurrection. Paul here is merely stating that the dead in Christ shall rise up before any of those still living at the end go to heaven. Then all the believers, those who were resurrected and those who are still alive, together shall meet the Lord in the air. Yes, Holy Scripture is clear on this point. Our Lord's second advent will take place at the end of the world. And this return will be accompanied by a universal resurrection and judgment. None of the many passages in the Bible permit a separation of these major events. In fact, the Lord's coming and the end of the world are phrases which may be and are used interchangeably. We therefore believe, as Scripture teaches, that Christ's return will be for the purpose of bringing to life all that are in the graves, of glorifying the bodies of the believers, of holding open and public judgment over the entire human race, and of then carrying out the verdict of His Judgment. Notice that this resurrection of all mankind is to take place immediately upon the return of the Lord, and that the good and evil are to be raised simultaneously, "-all that are in the graves." Holy Scripture does not speak of any lapse of time between His return and the resurrection of the dead, nor is the resurrection pictured as a long, drawn-out process, or as a double one with a thousand year long interruption. A person is readily informed of this in the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, especially verses 31-32, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." To be sure, there is only one bodily resurrection, a supernatural act of the Triune God. First He will gather together again the various parts of which the bodies were made, and then these remade bodies shall be reunited with the souls that were theirs in temporal life. The temporal death is the separation of body and soul; resurrection is simply the reunion of the two.

We might secondly take note of the three divisions into which F. Pieper separates the millennialists. These are "chiliasmus crassissimus, crassus," and "subtilis" (grossest, gross, and subtle chiliasm). The first anticipates a full measure of not only spiritual, but also carnal delights and pleasures. Gross chiliasm, secondly, teaches a future golden age of peace for the Church on earth, in which the Church, after a universal conversion of the Jews and the fall of Antichrist, will reign over the world for a thousand years. This is the one that teaches two visible returns of Christ, and a two-fold resurrection of the dead. Subtle chiliasm, finally, omits the double return and resurrection, confines itself mainly to hoping for better times for the Church on earth.

Although the millenium is absent from all of our ecumenical creeds, and the advocates decline to write a new creed including it, yet we can note the following six points which double as the creed of the millennialists.

1) that the present crisis points toward the close of the times of the Gentiles; 2) that the revelation of our Lord may be expected at any moment, when He will be manifested as evidently to His disciples as on the evening of His resurrection; 3) that the completed Church will be translated to be 'forever with the Lord'; 4) that Israel will be restored to its own land in unbelief and be afterwards converted by the appearance of Christ on its behalf; 5) that all human schemes of reconstruction must be subsidiary to the second coming of our Lord, because all nations will then be subject to His rule; 6) that under the reign of Christ there will be a further great effusion of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh.  
(Popular Symbolics, p. 367)

We have already quoted some passages of the Old Testament in which millennialists seek proof of their claims (see Pages 1 & 2 for Isaiah 2:2-4, 11:6-9, and Zechariah 9:9-10). To these we could add such as Joel 2:23ff, 3:18ff, and Micah 4:1-4. Indeed these passages teach clearly that all nations shall come to Mt. Zion, to Jerusalem, or to the Temple. This theme runs throughout the entire Old Testament. However, the fulfillment of these prophecies is not placed in any millennial kingdom, but the inspired Word says that in fulfillment all believers, without even leaving home, have already come to Mt. Zion. "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22). In other words, these passages are fulfilled with the coming of Christ into the flesh and the preaching of the Gospel in all the world. This is the establishment of the Holy Christian Church, the Church Militant, or the Kingdom of Grace. Following Pieper quite closely, the Rev. E. C. F. Stubenvoll writes an article reminding us that we do accept these statements of Holy Scripture, however, not in some vague hope of a future millennial kingdom, but at the birth of Christ when the angels sang "Peace on earth!" or "Gloria in excelsis!" And in later years during the ministry of Christ, He was not addressing citizen of a future millennium when He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Notice also that Paul exhorts the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God, which includes having "your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15). The peace of which the Old Testament texts speak, then, is already realized in the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh, in the reconciliation of God and the sinner, and in the sending of the Holy Spirit, who through this message of the Gospel works faith in the hearts of men, thereby creating children of peace in the whole world and among all nations. By faith in that Gospel, the Christian Church on earth possesses that peace which passes all understanding.

The chief passage used by the millennialists is Revelation 20. A thorough exegesis of the chapter is beyond the scope of this paper, and would constitute a paper in itself. Nevertheless, since this is the only place in Scriptures where Christ's ruling for a 1000 years is mentioned, and since this is the teaching of the millennialists, therefore it is necessary that we study it briefly, at least the first ten verses.

#### KJV

1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall

be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

### Jerusalem Bible

1. Then I was an angel come down from heaven with the key of the Abyss in his hand and an enormous chain. 2. He overpowered the dragon, that primeval serpent which is the devil and Satan, and chained him up for a thousand years. 3. He threw him into the Abyss, and shut the entrance and sealed it over him, to make sure he would not deceive the nations again until the thousand years had passed. At the end of that time he must be released, but only for a short while. 4. Then I saw some thrones, and I was those who are given the power to be judges take their seats on them. I saw the souls of all who had been beheaded for having witnessed for Jesus and for having preached God's word, and those who refused to worship the beast or his statue and would not have the brand-mark on their foreheads or hands; they came to life, and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5. This is the first resurrection; the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over. 6. Happy and blessed are those who share in the first resurrection; the second death cannot affect them but they will be priests of God and of Christ and reign with him for a thousand years. 7. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive all the nations in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, and mobilise them for war. His armies will be as many as the sands of the sea; 9. they will come swarming over the entire country and besiege the camp of the saints, which is the city that God loves. But fire will come down on them from heaven and consume them. 10. Then the devil, who misled them, will be thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet are, and their torture will not stop, day or night, for ever and ever.

Before we begin to discuss this chapter, it is well for us to understand that this is a prophetic vision, and how we should undertake the reading of it. No better advice can be given than that in the words of Prof. Armin Schuetze in an article in the Northwestern Lutheran.

To begin with, we must remember that St. John is reporting a vision. This vision is prophetic. The vision doesn't state directly what will happen, but it presents a picture that symbolizes certain truths. For this reason the words that describe the vision are not to be taken literally. We recognize it as wrong to explain symbolically a passage where Scripture speaks literally of what happened, as, for example, when it speaks of Jesus' resurrection. It is equally wrong to explain literally passages where Scripture clearly is speaking in pictures and symbols. Scripture must always be understood on its own terms. In Revelation 20 we have prophetic vision, not literal statements.

(The Northwestern Lutheran, December 8, 1968, p. 406)

The angel of v. 1 is the one to whom the key of the bottomless pit was given in 9:1. This is a created angel, rather than Christ Himself, for ἄγγελος is always an angel in Revelation. So in 12:7 it is the angel Michael and not Christ Himself who is referred to as the Victor in the war in heaven. Christ acts through His holy and powerful angels. The bottomless pit or abyss is an awful place of darkness, which can be locked and

unlocked, or even sealed. The key and the chain are symbolical, for no such fetters or restraints can hold a spirit. But the understanding is clear. Satan is to be bound and shut up in the pit. The chiliasts place the binding of Satan after the battle of the foregoing chapter (19:11-21), and thereby fabricate another battle after the lapse of 1,000 years in 20:7-10. One might note how misconceptions at one point lead to misconceptions consequently throughout! As they need two or three battles for their millennial views, so they need a decision whether to have two παρουσιάς, or comings of Christ. Not the least is that they need also a second resurrection.

As mentioned before, there is the common opinion among chiliasts that all the Jews will be converted. Some even believe that the hardened Jews of all past ages will be raised up and converted. In the millennial kingdom, the Jews should be considered the aristocracy of the land. All these present day opinions are only variations of the Jewish opinions condemned by our fathers in the Augsburg Confession.

It is true that Paul writes to the Romans (11:26), "And so all Israel shall be saved." But when he uses the term "all Israel," he is using it in the same sense that he used the term "fullness of the Gentiles" in the directly preceding verse. As little as every Gentile will be saved, just so little will every one who is an Israelite according to the flesh be saved. What Paul says here is that the full number of the elect out of Israel will be saved, even as the full number of the elect out of the Gentiles will be saved. The Gentiles saved constitute "the fullness of the Gentiles," and all the Israelites that will be saved are the "all Israel" of God. As long as God continues to gather His elect from among the Gentiles, He will also continue to gather His elect from among the Jews. And if this does not suffice to convince one, then let him read what Paul says as he plainly teaches that not all who are Israelites according to the flesh are also the Israel God recognizes as His Israel. Only those are Abraham's children who are of the faith of Abraham! These alone make up "all Israel" that will be saved. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Romans 9:6-8). This is echoed in Galatians 3:7, "Know ye therefore that they which are of the faith, the same are the children of Abraham."

Verse 3 speaks about the binding of Satan for a thousand years. This binding of Satan is spoken of frequently throughout the pages of the Bible. Jesus makes reference to it in Luke 11:21-22, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." We might also read here Isaiah 53:12 and Colossians 2:15. "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." We dare not overlook passages like I John 3:8, John 16:11 and Hebrews 2:14. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Accordingly, this binding of Satan took place when Christ cried out triumphantly from the cross, "It is finished!" and then sat down at the right hand of His Father. This binding then denotes the period of the New Testament dispensation. By His death, Christ delivered all men from the power of the devil. This deliverance is proclaimed in the Gospel, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" (Acts 26:18), and it becomes actual for the individual the moment he believes it, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13-14).

Since it is certain that Satan is chained for believers through faith in the Gospel, we shall say with Luther that—

the thousand years began when the Gospel began to be preached to mankind to convert it from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Accordingly, the thousand years plus the

'little season' in Revelation 20 constitutes the entire New Testament era, because the 'little season' is immediately followed by the general judgment of the world.  
(Quoted in Christian News, August 4, 1969, p, 8)

And when do the 1,000 years take place? The same Holy Scripture shows the answer! The 1,000 years are the complete New Testament era. The "thousand years" stand for a long period of time in contrast to "a little season" in v. 3. John was in that "thousand years" when he wrote this chapter. You and I are in it now. The two beasts and the whore are working now. "The great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication" (Rev. 19:2), and "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image" (Rev. 19:20). Satan is bound, but his agents are at work.

The "little season" during which Satan is to be loosed refers to the perilous times which immediately precede the coming of Christ to judgment. The battle of Satan, Gog and Magog, against the beloved city (vs 8-9) is not a physical battle employing all the modern machinery of warfare. No, this battle is of a spiritual nature, and consists in the fact that Satan will father all the evil forces within and without the visible church to attack and corrupt the true teaching of the Bible. The aim and purpose is to destroy the faith of men which alone keeps them as citizens of Christ's kingdom and heirs of salvation. Magog is mentioned in Genesis 10:2 among the sons of Japheth who were the ancestors of the northern tribes. Therefore the name Magog is used to denote the northern tribes, whose invasion of Palestine took place around 630-600 B.C. From Ezekiel 39 it seems that Gog was originally a leader among these tribes, and from Ezekiel 38:17 it seems that Ezekiel took these names to be symbolical of all the foes of the people of God. "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog,... In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely,... thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts,... it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes" (from Ezekiel 38:14-16). "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal... And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 39:1 & 6).

When the 1,000 years are finished, all souls will receive their bodies which they had when they died. The souls of the godly will receive their bodies to partake of the life which these souls led in heaven; the souls of the rest will receive their bodies, but without that life which these souls never had and never lived (Lenski's language). This is the teaching of the Scriptures, that in whatever state bodily death finds a man, with the ζωή or without it, in that state his soul remains until the last day, and after the end of the world, his soul and his body thereafter remain thus united in that state to all eternity.

Chiliasts, however, argue that when the 1,000 years begin, those mentioned in v. 4 will receive their bodies in a first resurrection, while those spoken of in v. 5 will have to wait until the 1,000 years are finished. They ask, "How can souls sit on thrones and be seen by John?" But John speaks about souls! He tells how long some will enjoy their eternal life in the next world, --and how long the rest will be without eternal life. And in both cases the souls are bodiless! Both groups wait for the day of Christ's judgment and the resurrection of their bodies. Notice how the chiliasts try to introduce this delay in the resurrection of the unjust. They will have to wait an extra 1,000 years to get their bodies back. I'm sure that if this were true, then they'd gladly wait the thousand years, or 10,000 years, yes, even forever. For when they receive their bodies back, the lifeless dust in the grave shall again be animated and subject to the torment their souls were already suffering.

When John writes, "This is the resurrection, the first one" (Αὔτη ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη) he plainly refers to what he wrote in v. 4. When the souls of the martyrs and the saints arrive at the thrones in heavenly glory, "this is the first resurrection." John here uses the term anas'tasis, resurrection, Auferstehung, symbolically. Here on earth we say that the godly die when their souls leave their bodies. John says that for their souls this is the resurrection, the first one. For now these souls live indeed, in the fullness of the ζωή, in heaven, rejoicing on thrones as kings with Christ in glory. Certainly, there is no such resurrection for "the rest of the dead."



Actually, John doesn't speak of a second resurrection, but by saying "the first," he implies a second. As the first transfers the soul to the throne in heaven, so the second brings the body to be reunited with the soul. Neither of these two resurrections is for the "rest of the dead." Neither their souls nor their bodies are transported to the heavenly thrones, to dwell there in the ζωὴ αἰώνιος.

The first resurrection of the vision is very wonderful. It recalls the statement of Rev. 14:13, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." This is what is meant by the first resurrection, that the dying person's soul is transferred, or literally he "has part in the rising up, the first one" (μακάριος καὶ ἅγιος ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῆ πρώτης.) This description shows him enjoying the highest happiness. "Holy" is significantly added to show that the last trace of sin and of the flesh has been swept out of the soul at the moment of death. By its anastasis, its rising up, the soul passes into heaven to a royal throne in pure and stainless state. The body will follow in due time after the "thousand years" are ended. Then the Lord will call it from the dust and it will experience its anastasis, the second one.

John continues, "On such the second death hath no power," it does not have authority; it cannot ever even touch them. It is striking how the vision here speaks of the first resurrection and the second death. By the first, it implies a second resurrection; and then, by the second, implies a first death. He who enjoys both resurrections suffers one death, the first one, which is the death of the body. And he who does not experience the first resurrection suffers both deaths, and, of course, fails to receive the second resurrection.

The soul that passes to its throne in heaven left its body by physical death; that is for this soul and this body the only death, and the body shall follow the soul at the last day. The soul that leaves its body in physical death and does not rise up to heaven, that soul and its body are sundered, not only by physical death, but "the second death" has and retains ἐξουσία, authority and power over them, sundering them both forever from the ζωὴ, from living the life eternal in heaven. Already here "the second death" is personified as a dread power and "authority." Verse 14 states what "the second death," thus personified, actually is. Death and hades being together thrown into the lake of fire = the second death. We usually speak of it as eternal death. (Lenski, p. 589)

The date setting phase has largely fallen into disfavor since efforts to identify the World War with Gog and Magog prophecies in Ezekiel and Revelation have failed. Present day dispensationalism no longer sets dates, but deals with the signs of the times, prominent among which are Zionism, the rising tide of atheism and the great political combinations. For the chiliasts, these signs are the forerunners of the end of the present dispensation and the start of the millenium. However, all attempts to set the day of Christ's second coming, all chronological computations, based on the arbitrary interpretation of Scripture numbers and data, such as have been put forth by the Adventists, Russellites, and others, are not only futile, but also wicked. They spring from idle curiosity and are destructive of the watchfulness and constant preparedness required of the Christian. Christ has told us that no one knows that date, not the angels, not even the Son of man according to His human nature. Therefore we should watch, and beware that the day does not take us unaware! It will come as a thief in the night, when men least expect it, when they think they are secure in their own protected homes etc.

What actually is the present status of the millennialist view? How far has it come in our United States? One of the earliest millennialists was a woman by the name of Ann Lee, whose followers are now called the Shakers. She herself came here from England in 1774. These Shakers were soon followed by a group called the Plymouth Brethren, 1827, who have now at least eight branches in our country. William Miller fixed the date of Christ's coming in his lectures in New York in 1831 to be in 1843. This prediction began a movement (Millerites) resulting in our Adventist churches. Miller himself was originally a Baptist. Another large group belonging to the premillennialist advocates is the Mormon Church. Charles Taze Russell began a very successful enterprise on the basis of his prediction of a millennial dawn, fixing the end of the world in 1914. The followers of Russell were first called Russellites, then Rutherfordites (after Russell's successor, Judge Rutherford), In-

ternational Bible Students, Millennial Dawnists, and finally Jehovah's Witnesses (after 1931). That they are prolific writers and active missionaries is a well established fact. Mead's Handbook states, "The official journal, The Watchtower, has a circulation of 3,700,000; more than 700,000,000 Bibles, books and booklets have been distributed since 1920; Bibles, books and booklets are available in more than 125 languages. In 1959 more than 870,000 Witnesses were active in this work through. out the world." (Page 119)

Although both Russell (d. 1916) and Rutherford (d. 1942) predicted the end to come in their own lifetime, yet both have died without seeing the millenium. Their present leader is Nathan H. Knorr, and he waits for Armageddon in a useless vigil. Witnesses today are well read in their own translation of the Bible, which of course is translated, or mistranslated, to fit their denial of the divinity of Christ and the coming of the millenium.

The Doukhobors also looked for the coming of Christ. Their name means "Wrestlers with the Spirit." Originating as a fanatical sect of Russians, they made a pilgrimage to Canada in 1902. This was because they refused to enter military service, and were persecuted by the Czar. When they left their homes, they took no food or water with them. Many wore no clothing. They expected to meet Christ at His second coming to usher in the millenium, and then all their needs would be supplied. Every once in a while some one would wave his arms and shout, "I see Him coming; I see Jesus!" And then the whole crowd would go mad.

The Mennonites are classed somewhere within the Anabaptist movement. They had their beginnings in the 16th century. Although they come from the post-Reformation period, their theology is not connected with Lutheranism. In fact, they are quite Romish in many points. One of their early leaders, Jacob Hutter (whence Hutterites), stressed chiliasm. The Anabaptists claimed that their ascetic tendencies could only be put into practice by establishing a "community of saints." They demanded absolute separation from the world, and refused to take part in social, industrial, economic or political affairs. Their nearly fanatical separation developed into a strange arrogance in that they thought themselves to be God's chosen people who would usher in the millenium.

Among the Congregationalists, chiliasm is taught in these words of their Savoy Confession, chapter XVI, 5: "As the Lord is in care and love towards His Church, hath in His infinite wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love Him and for His own glory, so according to His promise we expect that in the latter days, Antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of His dear Son broken, the Church of Christ, being enlarged and edified through a very plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable, and glorious condition than they have enjoyed."

We have already mentioned the Plymouth Brethren, also known as Darbyites. These "brethren" entertain quite extreme views concerning the premillennial coming of Christ. It is imminent and personal. Christ will return in all His glory with His saints to rule the earth and judge the world. After the resurrection of the just and unjust, He will take all the believers with Him into eternal glory.

The body known as the Catholic Apostolic Church (Irvingites) hold the fantastic view that the Lord's second coming cannot take place without the existence of the twelve-fold apostolate. At the time they predicted the millenium would arrive, the world wasn't ready yet, so they prayed for the return of the charismatic gifts of the apostles upon themselves that they might thus prepare the world. Naturally, they believe themselves to be the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1-5 who are sealed with the Holy Ghost.

And then there is the Angelus Temple, to which we connect the well-known Aimee Semple McPherson Hutton. Her work was originally Pentecostal in character. Then she became a Holy Roller, and became caught up in the tongues movement. Later she advertized herself as a Baptist preacher. Her Angelus Temple in Los Angeles is the headquarters of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and the four elements of its program are 1. Conversion, 2. Divine Healing, 3. Baptism of the Holy Ghost (including "tongues"), and 4. The premillennial Return of Christ.

Those which we know as the Holiness Bodies include such as the Assemblies of God, General Council. This group is decidedly premillennial. Another, the Holiness Church (of H. Wallace, J. Singer and H. Ashcroft) includes the privilege of divine healing along with the doctrine of Christ's premillennial return. In this connection

we might also mention the Pentecostal Holiness Church, which is the result of a union in 1911 of the Fire-baptized Holiness Church and the Pentecostal Holiness Church. It is also premillennial! So also is the Pilgrim Holiness Church, which is a fusion of several bodies. Noteworthy in this case is their rather nicely put motto: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials, liberty, in all things, charity."

The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, individually known as the Apostolic Faith Assembly, Full Gospel Assembly, etc., all look forward to the imminent return of Christ. This group, in the extreme form has come forth as the Holy Rollers.

A major sect, the Seventh Day Adventists have developed an eschatology in accord with their own fantastic theories. According to their teaching, Christ has provided for the atonement of sins, and on the last day will formally blot out the iniquities of men. They also maintain that Christ can intercede for the dead, since they aren't really dead, but only unconscious until the day of resurrection. They refer to this as "soul-sleep." At the second coming of Christ, the righteous dead will be raised, and together with the righteous living will be taken to heaven for the millenium. From there, they will rule the world and judge the wicked. Then, after 1,000 years, Satan, and the wicked who will be raised in the second resurrection will make their final assault on the saints. However, they will not succeed, but rather shall be repulsed, consumed and annihilated in a universal conflagration.

Even among antitrinitarians and universalists one finds devoted disciples of the millenium. One such group is the Christadelphians (Christ's Brethren). Although antitrinitarian, yet they expect Christ to lead them into a wonderful chiliastic paradise. The better known House of David (Israelite) is quite similar. Their founder claimed to have received certain revelations directly from God which enabled him to discover the true meaning of the Scripture, reserved for himself and the 144,000. Nor dare we overlook the Mormons in this list. They teach a second probation for the wicked in the world of spirits. They profess a grossest kind of chiliasm in which they claim that Christ will reign in peace here on earth for a thousand years. This millenium of the Mormons will be established either in Independence, Missouri, or in Utah. Joseph Smith in 1831 designated Independence as the "Zion" where the Lord shall appear at His second coming, and as the place where He shall gather the ten lost tribes of Israel.

To bring this part of the paper to a close, let's just read the list as given in the appendix of Popular Symbolics.

515. The following is taken from the index of the U. S. Census Report, Religious Bodies, II (1926). --The term "Belief in Second Advent" (first list) is used as a synonym of millennialism. ADVENT, SECOND, Belief in: Adventist bodies; Assemblies of God, General Council; Duck River and kindred association of Baptists (Baptist Church of Christ); Primitive Baptists; American Baptist Association; Brethren Church (Progressive Dunkers); Church of God (New Dunkers); Plymouth Brethren; Catholic Apostolic Church; Christadelphians; Church of Christ (Holiness) U.S.A.; Church of the Nazarene; General Church of the New Jerusalem; Congregational Holiness Church; Missionary Church Association; Pillar of Fire; Holiness Church; Latter-day Saints; Mennonite Brethren in Christ; Wesleyan Methodist Connection (or Church) of America; Reformed Methodist Church; New Apostolic Church; The (Original) Church of God; Pentecostal Assemblies of the World; Pentecostal Holiness Church; Pilgrim Holiness Church." (Popular Symbolics, p. 477)

Perhaps now it is well to summarize, in conclusion, the marks by which millennialism or chiliasm can be recognized as anti-Scriptural. First of all, it teaches a two-fold visible return of Christ, one of which is to establish the millenium, and the other to judge the world. Hebrews 9:28, quoted earlier, establishes the times and purposes of Christ's appearances. "Christ was once offered ...he (shall) appear the second time...unto salvation." Secondly, chiliasm proclaims two different and separate resurrections from the dead, martyrs and especially pious at the beginning of the millenium, and the "general run" of Christians and the wicked at the end of the thousand years for judgment. Christ refers to the resurrection as being on the last day. Concerning the

believer, Jesus says, "I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). In John 5:28 Jesus speaks of the hour in which all that are in the graves shall come forth. Thirdly we must mention that chiliasm perverts the actual teaching of Scripture and diverts the Christian hope to a reward of heaven already on earth. The way to heaven as described in Holy Scriptures, however, is just the opposite. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:11-12). And we hear Paul describing the common hope of all believers, not in any reference to a millenium, but "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Philippians 3:20-21)

The long catalog of millennialists already listed shows to what extended bounds this misguided hope has infiltrated and perverted the spiritual life of Christians and non-Christians alike. These are not satisfied with Christ's explanation, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). They refuse to believe the clear statement, "My kingdom is not of this world...my kingdom is not from hence" (John 18:36). Instead, they have fabricated the imaginations of their evil minds into a mythical kingdom that is to come with observation, and they all stand ready that they might be the first to shout, "Lo here!" or "Lo there!"

Lord, preserve us.....

Finis

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