

The Book of Revelation
Introduction
Lesson I
Additions-December 27, 2003

There are *three major views* relative to Bible prophecy and each will present a different view of the last Book of the Bible.

Post-Millennial view

The basic premise of this view is that Christ will not return to this earth until *after* a thousand years of peace. At the turn of the last Century, here in Canada, most of the Church denominations held this view. It led to the idea of a new Church that would have a passion for men, and would seek the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, not in the future. The social gospel was the message of the day. This teaching expected things to get better and better, but World War One did not help the cause. So the leaders of this movement called that war the “war that would end wars.” But the Second World War was fought 25 ears later! Strange as it may seem, this Old Post-Millennialism is being revived today under such names as Reconstruction; Dominion Theology, Kingdom Now etc, which are all basic forms of Old Post-Millennialism.

David Chilton has written: “ The Book of Revelation is not about the Second Coming of Christ.” (Dominion theology Blessing or curse? page 52); “Revelation was written before A.D. 70” (page 53). “Through generations of obedience, the godly will increasingly become competent and powerful, while the ungodly will grow weak and impotent” (page 58). Chilton estimates that it will take a minimum of thirty-six thousand more years before Christ is ready to return....” (page 66).

Kenneth Gentry wrote: “The present age is the New Covenant Era, or the Kingdom age, promised in O.T. prophecies. Before the Lord’s return the world will be dominated by the Christian message and the vast majority of mankind will be converted.” (page 142).

It is this kind of teaching that has led many evangelicals to get involved in the political field to try make this world a better place. That can never be done by men. Post-Millennialism is very much alive in the religious world of today and is the root of *The End Times Revival* preaching.

A-Millennial View

The basic teaching has been that there will *not* be a thousand year reign of Christ on this earth. The word actually means “anti-millennium.” With the evident collapse of post-millennialism after the first World War, many post-millennialists became a-millennialists. And the teaching thrived. Many Churches were divided over the issue.

I have a book entitled “God and the Jew” written by an a-millennialist in 1946. The VII

Chapter title: “THERE WILL NEVER BE A NATIONAL RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.” The book was published two years too soon!

After 1948, when Israel became a Nation again, I had one tell me, “It was all a mistake. He wished that the Arabs would push all the Jews into the sea.”

In the 1980’s I was given a paper written by an amillennialist who quoted the first verse of Mark but did not go on to quote the second verse. Mark 1:1,2 “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ , the Son of God: verse 2 *as it is written in the prophets* in other words, in the Old Testament. One cannot interpret the New Testament by ignoring the Old Testament.

In 2002, I received a paper written by an amillennialist, on page two I read. “We are told that prophecy is being fulfilled in our time, right before our eyes.” “Before we get too excited over the new Israel formed in 1948 and some of the *apparent* fulfillments of prophecy, we need to ask ourselves some important questions...” So now they look at what is happening as only “apparent fulfillments.”

I feel that the Amillennialists are so set on the idea of *nomillennium* that they fail to see what is written elsewhere in God’s Book. Like Peter, who was so sure that Messiah would set up his earthly kingdom at his first coming, when Jesus told his disciples that “he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer and be killed...”(Matthew 16:21) Peter did not hear the words, “and be raised again the third day”, so he rebukes the Lord by saying “this shall not be.” It did not fit his theology!

Peter was like the two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13) to whom Jesus said: “O fools and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken.” (Luke 24:25). They believed *some* but not *all*. To all of us Jesus will have to use those words on the day of our judgment.

Some one asked R.A. Torrey, “why cannot the Jews see that their own Old Testament Scriptures predicted a suffering Messiah who should make atonement for sin by his death, and that Jesus is the Messiah, it is so plain.” The answer is simple. .”because they do not want to.”

And I asked that person who asked me this question another question. “Why do not Christians today see that there are other predictions in the Old testament just as plain, and more of them, that the Messiah is coming as an all conquering King to rule the Nations with a rod of iron, that Jesus the true Messiah , is coming again? The answer is simple-because they do not wish to. Could it be that there are those who just do not want to believe what the Bible teaches about the Millennium? We may not see how it can Be true, but we should believe it just because God says so.”

PreMillennial View

Christ will return to this earth and reign as King, literally, for one thousand years.

We belong to this school of interpretation and therefore will be presenting the generally accepted pre-millennial interpretation of Revelation. I have acknowledged in

correspondence, that it is difficult for an A-millennialist to understand a Pre-millennialist and it is equally difficult for a Pre-millennialist to understand an A-millennialist

We must also mention that there are *three views* relative to the Rapture and coming great Tribulation. These are:

- Pre-tribulation Rapture;
- Mid-tribulation Rapture; and
- Post-tribulation Rapture.

(These subjects we deal with later)

Before we turn to the Book of Revelation we shall endeavour to show, at least in part, the basis of pre-millennial thinking.

The Old Testament is primarily about Israel.

Old Testament history is geographical and factual. We argue, if Old Testament history is not to be taken literally, then New Testament history cannot be taken literally, e.g., Matthew 1:1.

1. If the Old Testament cannot be trusted as God's truth, neither can the New Testament be trusted to be God's truth. Thus it is wrong to interpret the New Testament by ignoring the Old Testament. The Bible, though in two sections, must be looked upon as ONE BOOK.

2. One cannot study the Bible and ignore the Jews of the Nation of Israel. (I found the word "Israel" 2500 times in the Bible.) One cannot study the last two thousand years of human history and ignore the Jews. Since the Bible was written, Jewish history has continued to be made.

3. Nor can one observe Current events and ignore Israel. "Jews are News." That is a fact of current experience. In the light of Israel's literal return to their land and world recognition as a Nation, one wonders how students of the Bible can still feel justified in *spiritualizing* Israel.

4. I shall make this paragraph very personal. My interpretation of ALL Scripture, including the book of Revelation, is based on how I interpret the words "Jew" and "Israel." If I am wrong here, then my conclusions are wrong. I want to be the first to acknowledge that fact.

5. But before we conclude that God is finished with the Nation of Israel, *as a Nation*, the following points should be pondered. Why are the Israelites still with us? Why did the persecution of the Jews not cease in A.D. 70? Why, after 2000 years, are the Jews still different from all other peoples? How does one account for the fact that the historic Jewish Nation, (the same people of the O.T.), after 2500 years without a national homeland, is now back in the same land a thriving nation?

Therefore, before looking at Revelation, let us look briefly at the subject of "Israel." This is basic to the premillennial view.

The Exodus is the first great event in Jewish National History. Exodus 12:2

There are over 90 references to the Exodus in the Old Testament. There are also references in the New Testament cf. Hebrews 8:9; Jude 5; 2 Corinthians 10:1. This event was also a great prophetic type of our Lord's "Coming out of Egypt." Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15. But because there are spiritual lessons connected with this history, that does not change the fact that it is history. And a Pre-millennialist asks that we remember that this event was *first* Bible prophecy before it became history. See Genesis 15:13,14.

The Babylonian Captivity was another great event in Jewish history.

This Bible subject has been neglected. The history can be found in 2 Kings chapters 24,25; 2 Chronicles chapters 36:6-21; Jeremiah chapters 39,40,52; the entire book of Lamentations; Daniel chapters 1-5 and Ezekiel 1:1.

Again, we remember that this event was *first* in Bible prophecy before it became actual history. Jeremiah 25:11, etc.. The Babylonians destroyed the Temple and the City of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36: 15-21). These events were also *first* in prophecy before they became facts of history. cf Leviticus 26:31, Jeremiah 9:11, Micah 3:12, etc..

The return of the Jews to rebuild their Temple and their city is recorded in Ezra, and Nehemiah as Bible history. But again, remember, these events were *first* in prophecy before they became facts of history. See Jeremiah 29:10.

The Greatest event in Jewish history was the Coming of their Messiah to die on a cross.

The events were *first* in Old Testament prophecy (the Psalms and the Prophets) before they became New Testament facts. At the Cross, Israel as a Nation was set aside. The destruction and tribulations by the Romans, between 37-136 A.D. proved the literalness of God's dealings with the Jewish Nation. Even after the judicial setting-aside at the cross, the Temple was not destroyed until 70 A.D.. But the fact is, it was destroyed. The following are some of the Scriptures foretelling the coming of the Romans and the fall of Israel. Luke 19: 41-44; Luke 21:24; Luke 2:34 and 1 Corinthians 1:22,23. Romans 11 explains that it was the fall of Israel Nationally that made way for the Church.

Because the Church became God's present sanctuary on earth, Israel's Sanctuary was destroyed.

In John 2:16, Jesus called the Temple, "My Father's house." But in Matthew 23:38, He said it is "your house." And in Matthew 24:2 Jesus said, "... not one stone upon another would remain." Again, we follow the principle that the destruction of the Temple was in prophecy before it became actual, factual history.

The Church was also in prophecy before it became actual history. Matthew 16:18.

The Church never was Israel and never should be called "Israel." This is a major basis for pre-millennial interpretation of the Scriptures

The Pre-millennialist believes that the next great event will be the Rapture which will end the Church age.

This could take place any moment. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. This event is still a part of Bible prophecy but do we not have reason to believe that it too, one day, will merge into history?

Then the Jews and the world will be plunged into Great Tribulation.

This is another prophetic event Matthew 24:15, 21, 22,

On the basis of our reasoning thus far, do we not have strong reasons for believing that this prophecy will also become history?

After that Tribulation, Jesus will return in a great Revelation of Himself.

Matthew 24:29-30. This event is what the Book of Revelation is all about.

The Revelation is *from* Him. The Revelation is primarily *about* Him.