

# PREMILLENNIAL SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

## Introduction:

The study of Scripture will often lead beyond basic and obvious truth to interpretations which become more complicated, detailed, and confusing. Such difficulties should not drive us from study but rather to our Bibles where answers can be found for each question and understanding for each point of confusion.

Prophecy can fall under the category of interpretative detail and many times, confusion. Yet from prophecy not only can our hearts be confirmed as we realize its fulfillment, but our souls can be encouraged and our lives directed as we begin to understand the fulfillment of things yet future. In fact, it was my interest in the future fulfillment of prophecy that brought me to consider my personal standing before the Lord and my need to be saved. It was from reading a book on prophecy that I began seeking out a church that could not only help me understand prophetic truth but how I could be saved.

We want to consider today the prophecies which pertain to the millennium and specifically when the Lord Jesus is going to return in relationship to it. In order to understand this there are a few preliminary facts which must be briefly established first.

*The basic approach of the following information is explanation and quotation from original sources. As much as possible, I have presented statements of belief from the authors who actually hold those positions rather than secondary sources who merely explain what someone else believes.*

## I. BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE MILLENNIUM

### A. The Meaning of the Millennium

1. One thousand years
  - \* “From Latin mille, thousand; annum, year” (Unger; 731)
2. Christ’s future reign
  - \* “A theological term based upon Rev. 20; indicating the thousand-year period of Christ’s future reign on the earth in connection with the establishment of the kingdom ...” (Unger; 731).

### B. The Three Millennial Views

1. The reasons for three views
  - a. These views present the millennium in relation to Christ’s return.
  - b. These views also consider the millennium in a different light.
2. The beliefs of the three millennial views
  - a. Amillennialism
    - (1) Concerning the return of Christ
      - \* “Christ will return at the end of the world for the purpose of introducing the future age, the eternal state of things, and He will do this by inaugurating and completing two mighty events, namely, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment”

(Berkhof; 347).

- (2) Concerning the millennium
  - \* This "... is the view adopted in this work [that is, Berkhof's work], and holds that the second coming of Christ, the general resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment all synchronize; and that therefore the present spiritual kingdom of God passes right over into the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ" (Berkhof; 349).
- b. Premillennialism
  - (1) Concerning the return of Christ
    - \* "The view that holds that Christ will return to earth, literally and bodily, before the millennial age begins and that, by His presence, a kingdom will be instituted over which He will reign" (Pentecost; 372).
  - (2) Concerning the millennium
    - \* "In this kingdom all of Israel's covenants will be literally fulfilled. It will continue for one thousand years, after which the kingdom will be given by the Son to the Father when it will merge with His eternal kingdom" (Pentecost; 372).
- c. Postmillennialism
  - (1) Concerning the return of Christ
    - \* "The second advent is not to occur until the resurrection, when all the dead, both good and bad, are to rise at once" (Hodge; 570).
  - (2) Concerning the millennium
    - \* "The period of this general prevalency of the gospel will continue a thousand years, and is hence designated the millennium" (Hodge; 568-569).
    - \* The millennium, therefore, does not mean an entirely new and different state of things on this earth, but rather the elimination of the great majority of the evil influences that are still so prominent throughout the world, and a correspondingly higher moral and spiritual tone in the lives of the people" (Boettner; 56).

*TRANSITION: In review of these teachings, I have accepted the Premillennial position. The following information will detail the reasons for my choice, the Scriptures which teach it, and refutations of arguments against it.*

## II. ACCEPTANCE OF THE PREMILLENNIAL POSITION

### A. The Method of Interpretation is the Key Issue.

1. Recognized by those who hold to the Premillennial view
  - \* "The central issue ... is whether the Scriptures are to be fulfilled literally or symbolically. In fact this is the essential heart of the entire question." All of these views could be "solved only by settling the question concerning the method of interpretation to be employed" (Pentecost; 372-373).
2. Recognized by those who argue against the Premillennial view
  - \* "This theory [premillennialism] is based on an unwarranted literalism in the interpretation of the prophets and fails to take account of the spiritual interpretation suggested by the New Testament" (Berkhof; 352). (The following information in this section will show the legitimacy of the literal interpretation of prophecy as it relates to the millennium.)

B. The Proper Method of Interpretation is Literal.

1. The meaning of literal interpretation
  - \* “The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives to each word the same exact meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking” (Pentecost; 9).
2. The support for literal interpretation
  - a. It follows normal language usage.
    - \* “Inasmuch as God gave the Word of God as a revelation to men, it would be expected that His revelation would be given in such exact and specific terms that His thoughts would be accurately conveyed and understood when interpreted according to the laws of grammar and speech” (Pentecost; 10).
  - b. It follows the pattern of Old Testament prophecy fulfillment.
    - \* “Perhaps one of the strongest evidences for the literal method is the use the New Testament makes of the Old Testament. When the Old Testament is used in the New it is only in a literal sense. One need only study the prophecies which were fulfilled in the first coming of Christ, in His life, His ministry, and His death, to establish the fact. No prophecy which has been completely fulfilled has been fulfilled any way but literally” (Pentecost; 10-11).
    - \* “The conclusion must be that the New Testament literal method of fulfillment establishes the literal method of God’s method in regard to unfulfilled prophecy” (Pentecost; 61).
3. The reliability of literal interpretation
  - a. It allows for God to say what He means.
    - \* “Moreover, no interpretation can be at all satisfactory that does not allow words to have their natural meaning. It is not passing strange that the God who called light into existence with two words (yehi ‘or) should not be able to say exactly what He means?” (Feinberg; 42).
  - b. It disallows human conjecture.
    - \* The literal method “gives us a basic authority by which interpretations may be tested. The allegorical method, which depends on the rationalistic approach of the interpreter, or conformity to a predetermined theological system, leaves one without a basic authoritative test. In the literal method Scripture may be compared with Scripture, which, as the inspired Word of God, is authoritative and the standard by which all truth is to be tested” (Pentecost; 11-12).

C. The Literal Method of Interpretation Teaches the Premillennial Position.

1. Emphasized by the proponents of Premillennialism
  - \* “The method of interpretation that underlies the premillenarian position is the literal. This fact is recognized by the opponents of the view who claim that, if the literal sense must be taken in prophecy the millinarian doctrine must stand as the correct view of the Scripture” (Feinberg; 26).
2. Admitted by opponents of Premillennialism
  - \* (See Berkhof’s statement, on page 2 of this paper, II-A-2.)

- \* “The passage Rev. 20:1-6 at first sight much favors the conception of a millennial reign of Christ, participated in by the martyrs, brought to life in a first resurrection, and marked by a suspension of the activity of Satan” (written by Geerhardus Vos, an Amillennialist; ISBE; Vol. 2; 987).

*TRANSITION: Taking the literal interpretation of prophecy which presents a Premillennial view, let us now observe these prophetic Scriptures concerning Christ's return and the millennium.*

### III. PRESENTATION OF THE PREMILLENNIAL VIEW

“The premillennial view is the view that holds that Christ will return to earth literally and bodily, before the millennial age begins and that, by His presence, a kingdom will be instituted over which He will reign. In this kingdom all of Israel's covenants will be literally fulfilled. It will continue for a thousand years, after which the kingdom will be given by the Son to the Father when it will merge with His eternal kingdom” (Pentecost; 372).

#### A. The Conditions Prefacing Christ's Return

1. Conditions foretold in the Old Testament (Dan. 7:24-27)
  - a. The rulers at the time the kingdom is established.
    - (1) History does not sufficiently provide explanation for the time or identification of these rulers (Dan. 7:24).
      - \* “The endless explanation of critical scholars attempting to find these ten kings in the history of the Grecian Empire or to find them later in Rome, by their very disagreement among themselves demonstrate the impossibility of satisfactorily explaining this verse as past history” (Walvoord on Daniel; 175).
    - (2) The Premillennial view sees these rulers present at the time that the kingdom is established which is at a time yet future.
      - \* “If the ten kings are in power at the end of the age, it follows that they must be still future” (Walvoord on Daniel; 175).
    - (3) The Book of Revelation confirms the same number of kings as mentioned in Daniel as well as the time of their presence in relation to the establishment of the kingdom (Rev. 13:1; 17:12; 19:18-19).
      - \* “The fact that they appear in the book of Revelation, written long after the fall of the Grecian Empire, plainly relates them to the Roman Empire in its final stage” (Walvoord on Daniel; 175).
  - b. The fourth beast (representing the fourth kingdom) (Dan. 7:22-23, 25-26)
    - (1) The nature of this fourth beast and kingdom (Dan. 7:23)
      - (a) The kingdom of the fourth beast devours “the whole earth.”
      - (b) All previous kingdoms will be crushed to pieces by this fourth kingdom.
      - (c) This kingdom is one which will have political sway over all that was previous to its existence.
    - (2) The intent of the fourth beast and kingdom (Dan. 7:25)
      - (a) Blasphemy against God
      - (b) Persecution of God's people

- (c) The changing of times and laws
- 2. Conditions foretold in the New Testament
  - a. A day of spiritual apathy (Luke 17:26-37; I Peter 3:2-3)
    - \* The picture here is that of people going on about their business oblivious to the spiritual reality with which they are about to encounter. This same atmosphere will exist when the Lord returns. One of the greatest events of all time will occur catching the people of the day in a spirit of unconcern.
  - b. A day of surprise (I Thess. 5:2)
    - \* No one expects a thief. In the same way, the return of the Lord will catch people off guard.
  - c. A day of destruction (I Thess. 5:3)
    - \* People will trust in peace and safety, but “destruction” will be the result. Great somberness covers the scene when it is realized that “they shall not escape.”
  - d. A day of judgment (II Thess. 1:7-10; 2:1-12)
    - \* Judgment will fall on all that “obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thess. 1:8) and upon the “Wicked” one “whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (II Thess. 2:8).
  - e. A day of war (Rev. 17:9-18)
    - \* The kings and the kingdoms they represent (also mentioned in Daniel) are seen here warring against the Lamb (vs. 14). As they have now challenged Christ, He shall return in wrath to put down evil.
- 3. Conditions very much unlike the Postmillennialist and Amillennialist’s view of the Lord’s return
  - a. “This we can say: Postmillennialism does not despair of the power of God to convert the world, but hold rather that it cannot be defeated, that over the centuries it will win its way, and that eventually the goal will be achieved. In the light of these facts we face the future confident that the best is yet to be” (Boettner; 47).
  - b. “Says Dr. Warfield, ‘According to the New Testament, this time in which we live is precisely the time in which our Lord is conquering the world to Himself; and it is the completion of this conquest which, as it marks the completion of His redemptive work, so it sets the time for His return to earth to consummate His kingdom and establish it in its eternal form’” (Boettner; 61-62).
  - c. There is a vast difference between the outlook of the Postmillennialist and Amillennialist in relation to the conditions indicated by Scripture as being present in the world when the Lord returns. The Premillennial view allows the Scripture to literally portray the world in its evil condition at the time He returns.

## B. The Establishment of the Millennium at Christ’s Return

1. God reveals by Old Testament prophecy that His kingdom will be established (Dan. 2:44-45; 7:15-28).
  - a. This kingdom is established in the time of the other kings (Dan. 2:44).
    - \* That is, these other kingdoms have not gradually succumbed to the eternal kingdom. The eternal kingdom comes into their midst.
  - b. This kingdom consumes by force all the other kingdoms (Dan. 2:44-45; Zech. 14:3-4).
    - (1) The Lord will come to fight against the nations (Zech. 14:3-4).

- (2) Note the use of “break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold” (Dan. 2:44, 45).
- (3) Opponents to the Premillennial view see the kingdom as one which comes gradually.
  - \* “The redemption of the world is a long, slow process, extending through the centuries, yet surely approaching an appointed goal” (Boettner; 38).
  - \* “The Scriptures ... clearly reveal the gospel is to exercise an influence over all branches of the human family, immeasurably more extensive and more thoroughly transforming than any it has ever realized in time past. This end is to be gradually attained through the spiritual presence of Christ in the ordinary dispensation of Providence, and ministrations of his church” (Hodge; 568).
- (4) The prophecies in question do not picture a gradual conquering of nations.
  - \* “Not only is there no scriptural evidence whatever that the first coming of Christ caused the downfall of Gentile world power which is still very much with us today, but express prophecies relating to the second advent of Christ picture just such a devastating defeat of Gentile power. Revelation 19:11-21, which all agree is a picture of the second coming of Christ, is expressly the time when Jesus Christ assumes command as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is declared that at that time ‘He should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron’ (Rev. 19:15). If it were not necessary to make Daniel’s image conform somehow to the amillennial and postmillennial concept of the gradual conquering of the world by the gospel, no one would ever have dreamed that the smiting by the stone of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream described a long process now more than nineteen hundred years underway and still far from completion” (Walvoord on Daniel; 75).
  - \* Conclusion: “The effect is that the fifth kingdom, the kingdom of God, replaces completely all vestiges of the preceding kingdoms, which prophecy can only be fulfilled in any literal sense by a reign of Christ over the earth. The fact is that the amillennial interpretation, attempting to find fulfillment of the destruction of the image in history, does not provide a reasonable explanation of this passage. Only the premillennial position, which assigns this event as coinciding with the second advent of Christ, gives literal fulfillment to the symbolism involved in the destruction of the image” (Walvoord on Daniel; 76).
- c. This kingdom annihilates the fourth beast and his kingdom (Dan. 7:22, 26).
  - (1) Secured by the coming of God Himself (“the Ancient of days came”).
  - (2) Judgment will take away the “dominion” of the fourth beast and kingdom.
  - (3) Judgment will overtake and “destroy” the fourth kingdom.
    - \* That which is involved in the destruction and disarming of this fourth great kingdom lead by the fourth beast centers with the coming of “the Ancient of days.” The Premillennial view presents the fact that the Lord returns to destroy the kingdom of the Anti-christ, beast, and false prophet at which time He also establishes His millennial kingdom for the righteous. The following passages found in Daniel 7 also present this same reasoning.
- d. This kingdom is established and given to the Saints (Dan. 7:21-22, 27).
  - (1) This happens when the “Ancient of Days” comes (Dan. 7:21).
  - (2) The Saints possess the new kingdom (Dan. 7:22b).
  - (3) The kingdom is an everlasting kingdom (Dan. 7:27).

- e. This kingdom falls under the rule of the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:27).
  - \* "And all dominions shall serve and obey him."
- 2. God reveals by New Testament prophecy that His kingdom will be established (I Cor. 15:23-28; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:1-6).
  - a. This kingdom is established as a result of divine order (I Cor. 15:23-28).
    - \* "There is a definite order in the resurrection. Christ is the firstfruits; then those who are Christ's at His parousia; then comes the end" (Custer; 126).
      - (1) The resurrection of Christ occurred at the first advent (15:23a) - the firstfruits.
      - (2) The resurrection of the saints will occur at the second advent (15:23b) - "they that are his at his coming."
      - (3) The delivering of the kingdom to the Father is announced (15:24-28) - "then the end -- delivered up the kingdom to God."
        - (a) Prefaced by Christ's earthly rule (15:24b)
          - i) A rule of power
          - ii) A rule of authority
        - (b) The necessity of Christ's earthly reign is to put down all enemies (15:25).
        - (c) The extent of Christ's reign is to destroy death (15:26).
  - b. This kingdom is established at the time of His coming (Rev. 19:11-13, 16).
    - (1) Christ is the identity of the One Who is coming.
      - \* The names used in this passage all point to the person of Christ.
      - \* "The names given to Christ in verse 13 is 'The Word of God.' The Word of God, who according to John 1:1-3 is the Creator" (Walvoord on Revelation; 277) is also Christ Who is the Word made flesh.
    - (2) "Christ here is coming to the earth with the specific purpose of bringing divine judgment and establishing His righteous rule" (Walvoord on Revelation; 275).
  - c. This kingdom is established by immediate aggression (Rev. 19:11-15, 19-21).
    - (1) Christ makes warfare against the beast and kings in righteous judgment (Rev. 19:11).
      - \* "The titles given here to Christ are in keeping with the divine judgment which follows. He is declared to be faithful and true, and to judge and make war in righteousness" (Walvoord on Revelation; 276).
    - (2) Christ initiates the power sufficient to accomplish the annihilation of evil and the establishment of His kingdom (Rev. 19:14-15).
      - (a) He brings with Him His righteous army of Saints (19:14).
      - (b) The Sword of His mouth will subdue the nations (19:15).
      - (c) His rule over the kingdom will be with a rod of iron (19:15).
  - d. This kingdom is established by a crushing force (Rev. 19:19-20:2).
    - (1) Christ subdues the nations' attempt at warfare and judges all who warred against Him (Rev. 19:19-21).
    - (2) Christ subdues and sends to judgment the leaders of evil in the world (Rev. 19:20).
    - (3) Christ subdues and binds Satan, the master of evil, for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2).
  - e. This kingdom is established for a millennium (Rev. 19:15; 20:1-3).
    - (1) This is the foundation of a premillennial return of Christ. The chronology of the passages considered indicate that the 1,000 year period is preceded by Christ's return--not in peace, but in wrath and war to establish peace in His millennial kingdom.
    - (2) "The opening events of the twentieth chapter [of Revelation] then become a natural

outgrowth of the battle in which the beast and the false prophet and his armies are destroyed, leading to the next step, the judgment of Satan himself. The sequence of events is supported not only by the chronological order itself but by the logical dependence of one event upon the preceding event. This is strong evidence for chronological order in this section and, if this is granted, the millennial kingdom follows the second coming as described in 19:11-16. The only reason for denying such a conclusion would be to avoid premillennialism” (Walvoord on Revelation; 289).

- \* Because I am presenting the Premillennial view of Christ’s return, this position also affects certain passages concerning what the millennium will be like. Postmillennialists and Amillennialists view this period as fitting into eschatology in different manners. Because of this, we must observe . . .

C. The Character of the Millennium After Christ’s Return (Rev. 20:1-6).

1. The character of the kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament (Although reworded, the following points [a-i] are taken from Feinberg’s layout of these passages, pages 185-186).
  - a. The knowledge of God will cover the earth (Isa. 11:9).
  - b. Everyone will know God--instruction will be unnecessary (Jer. 31:34).
  - c. Israel will be spiritually cleansed and politically restored (Ez. 36:24-27).
  - d. War will cease and nations will be at peace (Isa. 2:2-4; Zech. 9:9-10).
  - e. Nature will be changed.
    - (1) The curse of nature will be removed (Isa. 35:1; Zech. 14:9-10).
    - (2) The nature of animals will be changed (Isa. 11:6-9).
  - f. The age of man shall be lengthened (Isa. 65:20).
  - g. The nation of Israel will no longer be divided (Ez. 37:21-22).
  - h. The nation of Israel will receive the position of favored status in bringing about the conversion of the Gentiles (Zech. 8:20-23).
  - i. All nations will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles yearly in Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16-19).
2. The character of the kingdom prophesied in the New Testament (Rev. 20:1-6).
  - a. The duration of the kingdom--one thousand years
    - \* Although many other passages give us greater details as to the characteristics of the kingdom, it is here in Revelation 20:1-6 that we are told the duration of this kingdom. “Instead of giving the whole doctrine of the Millennium, then, the text adds only the last element of time” (Feinberg; 185).
  - b. The premillennial view of the kingdom
    - \* The chronology this passage presents confirms the premillennial position. This passage presents the following important considerations: (The quotes for points (1) - (4) are from Feinberg’s presentation, page 185.)
      - (1) “The premillennial coming of Christ” (Rev. 19:11ff)
        - \* Revelation 20:1-6 naturally (chronologically) follows the coming of the Lord in Revelation 19. The prophecy of Revelation 19 presents the Lord’s return and victory over the beast and his kingdom. Immediately following is the establishment of His kingdom--a premillennial coming.
      - (2) “The premillennial resurrection of martyred saints and of Old Testament saints” (Rev. 20:4-5)

- \* “Most important also in verse 4 is the expression ‘they lived’, used in the sense of coming to life. Amillenarians who equate this with spiritual resurrection or regeneration point out that the verb does not actually mean to be resurrected, but only to live. While the word itself is not specific, it is the context which designates it as a bodily resurrection. Verse 5 states, ‘But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.’ The resurrection at the end of the millennium is obviously a bodily resurrection as it includes the unsaved. The context therefore invests the word with the necessary content of bodily resurrection. This is confirmed by the fact that the same verb is used of Christ in 1:18 where He states, ‘I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.’ The same expression is found also in 2:8. As Culver has pointed out, if the saints are going to reign with Christ, they will need to be alive in the same sense that He is, namely, having a resurrection body” (Walvoord on Revelation; p. 297).
  - \* “At the end of the great tribulation, the tribulation saints will also be raised from the dead. It would seem clear from these facts that the term ‘the first resurrection’ is not an event but an order of resurrection including all the righteous who are raised from the dead before the millennial kingdom begins. They are ‘first’ in contrast to those who are raised last, after the millennium, when the wicked dead are raised and judged. Just as there are two kinds of physical death, namely, the first death which results in burial, and the second death which is described as being cast into the lake of fire (20:14), so there are two kinds of resurrection, a first resurrection having to do with the resurrection of the righteous, and a second resurrection having to do with the wicked. They are separated by at least one thousand years. Just as the first death did not occur to all in one moment but is experienced individually by those who die over a long period of time, so the first resurrection is fulfilled according to the groups that are in view” (Walvoord on Revelation; 299).
- (3) “The premillennial judgment of Israel” (Rev. 20:4,6)
- \* “In a similar manner the house of Israel is judged according to Ezekiel 20:33-38. The implication in the latter part of verse 4 is that the tribulation saints resurrected from the dead are also judged and rewarded. If the saints of the Old Testament are raised at this time, they too may be the objects of divine judgment and reward” (Walvoord on Revelation; 296).
- (4) “The premillennial binding of Satan” (Rev. 20:1-3)
- (a) A point of contention in interpretation
    - \* “The dramatic prophecy contained in these verses has been the subject of endless dispute because to some extent the whole controversy between premillenarians and amillenarians hangs upon it” (Walvoord on Revelation; 290).
  - (b) Doubt cast by some writers as the meaning of Satan’s binding
    - i) Amillennial position on Satan’s binding
      - \* “The amillennialist says that the 20th chapter of Revelation begins with the events which occurred shortly after the First Advent of Christ, and describes events in the interadvental period.” As for an explanation of this binding of Satan, Matthew 12:24-29 is suggested. Jesus “went on to explain that no one can spoil the house of a strong man without first binding the

master of the house! The context makes it perfectly plain that Christ was claiming that he could cast out demons because he had first bound Satan! Here then we have definite authority in the words of Jesus Himself, for saying that He had “bound” Satan before casting out demons” (Hamilton; 128-129).

- \* “I suppose that no one would insist that Satan is to be bound with a literal chain of iron or some other metal, for Satan is a spirit and material chains could not hold him captive for a moment. Binding always means the limitation of power in some way” (Hamilton; 129-130).
- \* “So Satan’s being bound does not mean that he is powerless to tempt people, and we know that he does. It is merely limitation of Satan’s power in one particular respect especially, that of ability to ‘deceive nations.’ During the interadventual period the gospel is to be proclaimed to all nations, and Satan is powerless to prevent it. The way of salvation has been opened to all nations and there is nothing that Satan can do to block that way” (Hamilton; 130).

ii) Postmillennial position on Satan’s binding

- \* “In Revelation 20 we do not understand John to write of a literal dragon or of a literal serpent. Nor do we understand him to say that the angel has a literal key or a literal chain in his hand with which he binds the Devil. The ‘thousand years’ is quite clearly not to be understood as an exact measure of time but rather as a symbolical number. Strict arithmetic has no place here. The term is a figurative expression, indicating an indefinitely long period of time, a complete, perfect number of years, probably not less than a literal one thousand years, in all probability very much longer. It is, however, a definitely limited period, during which certain events happen, and after which certain other events are to follow” (Boettner; 64).
- \* This position can be seen in the writings of commentators like Albert Barnes when he says, “The dragon. . . is expressly said to mean the devil, and Satan. It would seem, however, that it refers to some manifestation of the power of Satan that would exist after the beast and the false prophet--that is, the Papacy and Mahometanism--should be destroyed, and probably the main reference is to the still existing power of Paganism” (Barnes; 419).
- \* Concerning the time element involved for Satan’s binding, Barnes says, “There is nothing . . . contrary to the common use of symbols in this book in regard to time, in the supposition that this was designed to describe the longest period” . . . “in the prophetic use of the term, where a day would stand for a year, thus making a period of three hundred and sixty thousand years” (Barnes; 420).

(c) Answers to the arguments against the premillennial position

- i) It is obvious that the two positions just presented concerning Revelation 20 is done so symbolically. Premillennialism interprets this passage (as all Scripture) literally if at all possible. The explanation lies in literal interpretation first of all.
- ii) The premillennial explanation and interpretation of Revelation 20
  - \* “The passage yields to patient exegesis, and there is no reason for taking

it in other than its ordinary sense” (Walvoord on Revelation; 290).

- \* “The difficulty with this symbolic interpretation is that it fails to satisfy the passage. The mounting evidence for Christianity does not seem to have bound Satan in the twentieth century” (Walvoord on Revelation; 291).
- \* Concerning the binding of Satan with chains: “Whatever the physical character of the chain, the obvious teaching of the passage is that the action is so designed as to render Satan inactive. The intention is not to represent Satan as merely restricted but as rendered completely inactive. In confirmation of this, verse 3 states that he is cast into the abyss, which by its character is a place of confinement. If God wanted to show that Satan was totally inactive and out of touch with the world, how could he have rendered it more specifically than He has done in this passage?” (Walvoord on Revelation; 291-292).
- \* Concerning the Amillennial idea of the interadvental period: “Opposed to the amillennial interpretation, however, is the uniform revelation of the New Testament which shows that Satan in the present age is a very active person. If anything, he is more active than in preceding ages and is continuing an unrelenting opposition to all that God purposes to do in the present age. There are few theories of Scripture which are less warranted than the idea that Satan was bound at the first coming of Christ” (Walvoord on Revelation; 292).
- \* See the following Scriptures which show that Satan is still at work in the present: Luke 22:3, 31; Acts 5:3; II Corinthians 4:3-4; 11:14; Eph. 2:2; I Thessalonians 2:18; II Timothy 2:26; I Peter 5:8

(d) Concluding argument to the premillennial interpretation of Revelation 20

- \* “. . . with the vision recorded as it is, accompanied by the divine interpretation, expositors are not free to inject their own preconceived ideas, but must accept the plain statements and interpretations of the passage as given . . . in its ordinary and literal meaning. If this is done, there is no other alternative than the premillennial interpretation which holds that at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound for a thousand years. This will constitute one of the major features of Christ’s righteous rule upon the earth and in fact will make possible the peace and tranquillity and absence of spiritual warfare predicted for the millennial kingdom. The period before Satan is bound, that is, the great tribulation, and the period at the close of the millennium, when Satan is again loosed, stand in sharp contrast to the tranquility of the thousand years in between. The fact is that the only period in all human history in which Satan will not execute his work of deception will be the thousand years in which Christ will reign” (Walvoord on Revelation; 293-294).
- \* “There is no good reason for taking the thousand years in other than their literal sense” (Walvoord on Revelation; 295).

## Conclusion:

What a blessed hope man has been given! Not only is the Lord returning, but He is going to set up a kingdom of righteous rule where all will succumb to the peace of Christ.

The kingdom which He sets up is a special kingdom where Satan is bound, where the lion shall lie down with the lamb, where even the desert places will bud forth with beautiful foliage, and where the knowledge of God will cover the earth. Most important, the Lord Jesus Christ will be the peace and blessing of this kingdom which will last for a thousand years.

Along with the coming of the Lord, the Scripture enjoins watchfulness. The Lord is returning; we must be ready. Are you ready to meet the Lord? Have you been saved? Only by accepting Him into your heart for salvation will you be ready to see Him. Trust Christ today.

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