

THE THREE MILLENNIUM VIEWPOINTS  
APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bible describes to all who read it God's creation and his plan for all humanity throughout the ages. Worship and relationship with God is the "why" when speaking of humankind's existence, and being the creator, it is imperative that all of creations know his purpose and plan for that which was created. It is important to note that the bible emphatically states that God is the creator. With this knowledge, we can see the holiness of God (purity, righteousness, goodness, and love) and unholy (everything not measuring up to God's holiness). It is because of the unholy state of humankind through the fall in the garden, that God brings judgement upon His creation. God love (holiness) toward his creation provides a way in which redemption can take place (through Jesus Christ) and holiness can be obtained by unholy human beings.

The book of Revelations brings us to a time when God brings all of his creation to judgement. We may ask why judgement if god knows the beginning from the end and know our every thought? God has given us the ability to choose to be in relationship with Him. This relationship requires worship, love, and obedience, but it a choice. Making an alternative brings about the judgement of God regarding your choice to live without a relationship with him. This will not only be a state of being,

but a place of residence. Humankind will live in an eternal place of holiness or in a place of damnation called hell or the lake of fire.

### Millennial Views

As you read the bible, from the Old Testament to the New, God reveals His plan of redemption, which culminates in the book of Revelations. From the Prophets to the Apostles, each believed, through their testimonies that the messiah would come, and then that he would come again after His death and resurrection. The viewpoints that have been discussed over time give different insights and interpretations of the scriptures that should be thoroughly studied, but more so, believed by faith in order to be prepared for Christ and His return. The three viewpoints we have studied through this course and for the purposed of this paper are the Amillennial view, the Pre-millennial view, and the Post-millennial view. Each in its own right have been studied by scholars to validate their stance, but the questions become which can be dealt with by scriptures and shown to be accurate. As we look at what each claims, we will see the distinctions between them and more importantly, see where they may error as their stance relates to the scriptures.

## The Amillennial View

This viewpoint in essence means “no millennial” thousand-year reign of Christ in the earth. There are various reasons for this school of thought. Augustine was a proponent of this view as his work “The City of God” was based on this view as stated in our text. Augustine’s viewpoint was that the millennial was in reference to the time between the First and Second Advent of Christ.<sup>1</sup> It also adheres to the belief that the millennial is being fulfilled in the earth now. We have H.B. Sweete’s argument that the millennium started with the triumph of Christianity at the time of Constantine, there is also the view that the millennial is being fulfilled by the saints in heaven.<sup>2</sup>

As we see at the onset, there are differing views even amongst those that have the Amillennial viewpoint. The challenge is finding the truth that will align with the truth of the scriptures. The stance taken by Augustine is that Satan was bound at the first coming of Christ. Augustine wrote about this in his book the City of God and believed that the millennial reign of Christ is the church age (now). In the book of Romans 16:20, Apostle Paul writes, And the God of peace shall bruise

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<sup>1</sup> Walvoord, John F., Revelation, (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2011), 299

<sup>2</sup> LaHaye, Tim F., Revelation Unveiled, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 335

Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Shortly signifies that it has not taken place as of yet. In the book of Genesis, we see this word prophesied and God contending that Satan will bruise the heel of Christ, but "will be" placed under the foot of believers.

Grace is necessary to enable believers to endure the enemy (Satan) and his attempts to derail us from following Christ. Augustine also contends that the church is winning the battle against Satan and Jesus will return once the church age victory is won. According to Tenney, the amillennial interpretation of Revelations 20:1 is either it is a description of the current period before the return of the Lord or it has not particular significance.<sup>3</sup> This a dangerous as when do we (humankind) get to determine the significance of any portion of the Word of God.

The Amillennialist also argues that Jesus established his spiritual kingdom and that he did not actually speak of a literal kingdom. In Tenney's writing, he quotes Jesus speaking to Pilate in John 18:36, My kingdom is not of this world. Amillennialist takes this to mean that the kingdom is essentially spiritual in its origin and nature. I like how he addresses this concept with the necessity of the material need of the subject of Jesus's

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<sup>3</sup> Tenney, Maxwell C., Interpreting Revelation, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957) 153

kingdom here on earth and how spiritual kingdom is not dependent upon material necessities but is not bound by the spiritual realm.

### The Postmillennial View

What is known as post-millennialism began with a Unitarian named Daniel Whitby. There were four propositions he set forth that states 1) the first resurrection was not a literal resurrection but spiritual, 2) The millennium is to come. This is where he differed with Augustine, 3) Satan will no longer trouble men, and 4) The church will triumph completely. Similar to the amillennial view, the post-millennial view also ascribes to the church bring the world to a euphoric state prior to the second coming of Christ. The belief is the presenting of the gospel with bring about the final triumph in the present age. As our text states, it is hard to imagine our world getting better with wars being fought and the world seemingly always on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. For this viewpoint to prevail and Christ to return, the church must make some drastic changes in how it presents the gospel to bring the world to this golden age. It is fathomable to believe that humankind can do so without the help of the holy spirit. He is the one who graces and empowers us to withstand the enemy and keep the faith until Christ return.

Many who hold this post-millennial view have abandoned it due to the sign of the times. Wars, period of famine and oppression, are just a few of the reasons this viewpoint does not hold up. If the church is to bring the world to a place of euphoria and we walk in the total victory before the second coming of Christ, we have work to do. Unfortunately, if we are attempting this in our own strength, we will never accomplish this task, which further speaks to this being outside the truth of the scriptures.

#### The Premillennial View

Most believers in Christ agree with the premillennial view. Their belief is in the literal reign of Jesus Christ for a thousand years and that it will take place prior to the millennial age. They do not believe it will be just a spiritual reign, but a literal and bodily return. Premillennialist believes Christ will institute His kingdom on earth and rule for a thousand years. Tenney states that if you believe the Bible to be literal, you are basically a premillennialist.<sup>4</sup> While the bible is spiritual due to the author of the book, if a person only spiritualizes prophetic writings, or specific teachings, it is imperative that varied interpretations will be the results ad

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<sup>4</sup> LaHaye, Tim F., Revelation Unveiled, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 331

truth will not be obtained. Early Christians were premillennialist as are most Christians today. There is always an expectancy of Christ return.

According to Tenney, the premillennial view seems to do justice to the structure of Revelation.<sup>5</sup> This view embraces all of the aspect of not only the book of Revelation, but scriptures throughout the bible that speaks to the return of Christ. One of the teachings of Jesus that comes to mind is when He says He was going to prepare a place for his disciples. If this was only spiritual in nature, then, His work on the earth was in vain. He was preparing them to be disciples (Apostles) to make disciples. If Christ was still preparing only spiritually, they would not have been equipped to prepare others with the truth of Christ.

Christ predictions of His return like a thief in the night, in the twinkling of an eye to gathering the saints, raising them from dead, and judgement of the unjust with Satan. These all aligns with the premillennial viewpoint and attest to the reign of Christ as predicted in the scriptures.

An interesting point of note is the absence of the Holy Spirit is the discussion of the Amillennial and Postmillennial viewpoint. It is all conducive on the Church (believers)

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<sup>5</sup> Tenney, Maxwell C., Interpreting Revelation, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957) 164

obtaining a state of being that usher in Christ return. The Holy Spirit is working in believers in the church age to enable us to withstand the works and attacks of Satan to prepare for the coming of Christ and to rule and reign with Him. When the Church is raptured, the New Testament power of the Holy Spirit is also removed from the earth. The removal of Christians and the Holy Spirit allows the Antichrist to take control of the world.<sup>6</sup>

### Conclusion

It is my belief that the premillennial view aligns itself with the scriptures. Christ return, reign, and judgement of evil is true to the teachings throughout the scriptures, and to be joint heirs who will rule and reign with him in the promised kingdom gives credence to this view. To bring the earth to a state of euphoria without Christ as proposed in the Amillennial view contradicts the scriptures not only put the responsibility on the church to when the victory over evil without Christ, but goes back to a people looking for just a physical ruler during the time of Christ who will reign like the Roman empire. This places the religious system in control and not the Lordship of Christ.

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<sup>6</sup> Warren, Mike, An Eschatology Bible Study, ([www.christianciv.com](http://www.christianciv.com)): 2010

If nothing else, the scripture have taught believers and are commanded us to keep the faith in the victory to come in Christ. The millennial reign with Christ is not different. As we continue to spread the Gospel, many people will be prepared to be caught up with Christ and descend upon the earth with Him during the time of His millennial reign. The church age is about making disciples who will make disciples.

It is through the grace of God we are able to endure Satan in this present age. It will be by the judgement of God that he will be bond, released, and cast into the lake of fire. As believers, we are commanded to have faith in God through Christ Jesus. Christ has given us the keys to defeat Satan, His word, but the church still must believe in the literal truths of the bible in order to experience the grace of God both in the now and eternity.