

## ***The 1,000 Year Reign of Christ***

*Len Teague March 24, 2013*

***(From NIV) Revelation 20:1-8***

***And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.***

***4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.***

***7 When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.***

- A Question of Hermeneutic and an overview of FOUR main Views concerning Revelation 20:1-7

Understanding the mind of God and “The Apostle John” in this case, involves recognizing and choosing the proper hermeneutic. A parallel of choosing the proper hermeneutic in a Golf Club analogy where there are many clubs that are generally used for certain /specific shots. Winning a Golf Tournament requires hitting the best and most proper shots. Choosing the right club at the right time and then using that club most precisely (better than ones opponent) is of most importance. Caddies make big money when their player wins a big tournament. They are crucial in helping make decisions about which clubs to use at just the right time. ***Successful-golfers generally do not putt with their drivers nor do they tee off with their putters.***

In Biblical hermeneutics the most basic two choices for a specific passage such as Revelation 20, or verses being interpreted correctly is either “The Literal Hermeneutic” and/or the “Symbolic

(metaphoric) Hermeneutic”. The Bible is full of both.

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- Jesus wept -literally we all do believe. We also know that Jesus said “destroy this Temple and I will raise it up in three days' and that He was referring to His Body. **The Romans and the Sanhedrin used the wrong literal hermeneutic and tried and crucified Jesus** (among other reasons) perhaps as a “potential terrorist” who was out to destroy their Temple, all the while as Jesus was speaking metaphorically as he so often did (See all the parables). Interpretation is Important!!!
- In interpreting Revelation 20 many well meaning Theologians have differed in their Hermeneutic as to what John was writing, and in doing so have come to some major differing beliefs.

Revelation 20 uses the terminology of a “thousand years” 6 different times in the first 7 verses. When interpreting this passage we generally find that there are 4 major views of this 1,000 year Reign.

- These 4 general views are alphabetically:
- Amillennial, Post Millennial, Pre-Millennial and Dispensational Premillennial- all get their meanings from these 6 times in this Chapter 20 of Revelation's usage of the terminology of “thousand Years”. Regardless of what view one holds, they all have an interpretation of what 1,000 years is and/or pertains to.
- **A Question of Hermeneutic.** What other places is the phrase “Thousand Years” ever used in the Bible?

**When used, are the verses speaking literally or figuratively (metaphoric) ? There are ONLY 3 other times in the Bible where the exact phrase “Thousand Years” is used. Here they are.**

#### **Psalm 90:4**

For a **thousand years** in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

- **Ecclesiastes 6:6**

Even though he should live a **thousand years** twice over, yet enjoy no good—do not all go to the one place?

- **2 Peter 3:8**

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a **thousand years**, and a **thousand years** as one day.

So all three times the phrase is used, each is used figuratively and not literally.

- Looking into the 4 Main Views from Revelation 20:1-7

What hermeneutic does the Amillennialist use? The Amillennial sees Revelation chapter 20 as Metaphoric or Symbolic or figuratively which are all synonymous. The Amillennial sees Revelation 20 (and most of Revelation as a “**This means That**” book and chapter. The Amillennial sees early in Chapter 1:1 (KJV) that it reads and gives a huge hermeneutical hint as to what and what manner things are about to be revealed concerning Jesus Christ and how they are to be interpreted.

- Revelation 1: 1 reads: KJV

***The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,***

The Etymology dictionary defines signify roots as: from Latin significare "to show by signs, Revelation is a Book revealing through many signs or symbols the workings and dealings of Jesus Christ in past, present, and future pictures. Revelation to the Amillennian is most usually not properly interpreted as Literal but Symbolic of things. **"This means that":** ie, as also in chapter 1:20 it reads and displays the **prominent hermeneutic early** on of the entire book:

*20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches. (In other words- This means that)*

- **The Amillennian sees the 1,000 years as "The Gospel Age" sometimes called the Church Age in which Satan has been bound "Salvifically or Soteriologically" (that he should no longer deceive the nations) as the Gospel is carried to all The Nations. It is the Time of the gathering of all The Elect from the 4 corners of the earth. The Gospel Age and the Kingdom of God is expanding into all the world through missions and perseverance along side of personal trials and tribulations.**
- *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33*
- *The Amillennian might point out that*

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century alone it was estimated that 48 million Christians were killed for their faith worldwide and over 70 million have been martyred since Jesus said these words.

**Luke 17:21** [King James Bible \(Cambridge Ed.\)](#)

Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, **the kingdom of God is within you.**

- **The post Millenarian** uses a similar symbolic hermeneutic as the Amillennian and sees things very generally the same often times. That is, the Post Millennian see the Church Age as the Golden Age where things get better and better. The Post Millennian often view the Scriptures spiritually as well as physically depending on the context and other hermeneutic tools. The Post Millenarian could be described as a "Very Optimistic" Amillennian. He sees the Gospel and the Great commission as having Global success to the point that things will get really really good on earth, thereby ushering in the final and eternal state. They usually do not insist upon a literal 1,000 years but see the 1,000 years as the Golden age of the Gospel whereby the world become s a more righteous and Holy place. The Gospel and the World will prosper spiritually and this spiritual prosperity will usher in the return of the Lord Jesus for the final Age to come. As has been previously mentioned, this view has diminished among many theologians since World War 1,2 and especially now, I would surmise ,as the moral compass of our country is spinning wildly as is the world. Praise God though the Church and The Gospel is marching on and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, regardless of what eschatological view one holds. **We**

**have a command to Preach the Gospel in Season and Out of season.**

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**The Historical Pre-Millennial position** is according to Robert Clouse, Editor of “The Meaning of the Millennium, Four Views”, defined as: *“Premillennialism is the doctrine stating that after the Second Coming of Christ, he will reign for a thousand (literal years) over the earth before the final consummation of God's redemptive purpose in the new heavens and the earth of the Age to come”*. The Historic Premillennial position does not require a “different purpose for Israel of the Flesh and Israel of the Spirit aka. The Church as the \*original Dispensational Premillennial holder does. The Historic Premillennial position does hold to a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ. It is closest to the Amillennial position in the regard that it does not see a separate purpose of Israel of the Flesh and Israel of the Spirit (The Church) as does Dispensational Premillennialism.

- **Dispensational Premillennial**

**“Not all Premillennialist’ are Dispensational, but all Dispensationalist’ are Premillennial”**

As alluded to earlier, the **Dispensational Premillennialist** holder sees the Scriptures in a more dichotomous way. What I mean is the dispensational view sees the Bible divided between the Jews and the Church often and sees God as having two purposes and two peoples and in part of the end times Two Places for the Two Peoples. The Jews remain on Earth and the Church is raptured to Heaven. The Chosen People of the Old Testament and the Chosen people of the New Testament have differing futures in the Dispensational viewpoint.. They often see and interpret verses that speak of the kingdom of God as pertaining to the Jews and the Kingdom of Heaven pertaining to the Church. The Dispensational Premillennial holder often might see the scriptures Hermeneutically centering on the Jews where the Amillennial would more likely see that the Scriptures are often centered about Jesus and His Bride in Types and Shadows in the Old Testament and in the Light more clearly seen in the New Testament. (Luke 24:37)

The Dispensationalist would tend to see the Scriptures especially the Old Testament promises to Israel as needing to be fulfilled literally (meaning physically), whereas the Amillennial holder would see the promises of Israel fulfilled and realized in the Church. The Dispensationalist would hurl a grenade into the Amillennial camp calling that “replacement theology.” The Amillennial would simply reply not replacement theology but “Realized Theology” or Expansion Theology. Not regional theology but Global Theology.

**A Question of Trying? A question of failure? A question of debt?**

The Dispensationalist would see Jesus first Incarnation as coming down from Heaven and then to Jerusalem ultimately to TRY to offer the Jews His Kingship and Kingdom and they rejected Him. He Tried but Failed!

So was Jesus’ first mission a failure? No, the dispensationalist would say, because He came up with Plan B, The Church. The Amillennial might say that God needs no Plan B's. You can begin to see why many if not most Calvinistic (sovereignty of God folk)thinking folks often lean away from dispensationalism towards amillennialism or Post millennialism but certainly not all.

The dispensationalist might hold that “God owes the Jews” and has not fulfilled his promises to them and that this is most important because if he could and would do that to them, then what assurance does the Church have?

The Amillennialist might retort that God is no debtor to anyone but it is man that is in debt to God. In the Dispensational view it is interesting that theologians holding this view “can see” the “1,000 year Jewish Flavored Reign of Christ” hidden in the Old Testament but fail to see the Church in the Old Testament Prophecies.

John Walvoord stated, "In the previous study of premillennialism and the church, it was brought out that the church is a body of believers in this age distinct in character from the Old Testament saints. Further, it was shown that the present age is a parenthesis or a time period not predicted by the Old Testament".

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**Where is the Kingdom during the 1,000 years?** Revelation 20:4 reads that John saw Jesus and The Souls of those slain-Those dead-. **Where are the souls of those dead Believers? Are they On Earth or in Heaven? Wherever they are, they are where Jesus is? Where is Jesus today and where is all the Souls of the Saints today?**

The location of where and whom are with Christ during the 1,000 years is paramount. Is Jesus and the 1,000 Year Reign, on earth or Heaven? Does John see BODIES or SOULS? Are souls visible? The Amillennian sees this referring to heaven in verse 4. The Dispensationalist and most probably most Historic Premillinnians see the souls as being on earth. To the Amillennial ,**The Word SOULS is a huge sign to interpret. And meditate upon. " But his delight is in the law of the Lord and on it he meditates day and night"**.

Finally, what does the OLD 1689 London Baptist Confession say about a Thousand Year Reign and the Souls of believers. The Old Confessions of 1644, 1646, and 1689 all say NOTHING about a "Thousand Year Reign" but they do speak of where the Souls of men are after death. In Section 31, the Ancient Baptist Confession reads

## 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith

Chapter 31: Of the State of Man after Death and Of the Resurrection of the Dead

1. The bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption; but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. **The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, and behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies;** and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell; where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day; besides these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none. (Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6,8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23; Jude 6, 7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23, 24 )

Here reads the Westminster Confession from 1646 regarding Souls after death awaiting the resurrection of their Bodies.

Westminster Confession Of 1646 - CHAPTER XXXII.

*Of the State of Man After Death, and  
and of the Resurrection of the Dead.*

I. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust, and see corruption: but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: the souls of the righteous, being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Beside these two places, for souls separated from their bodies, the Scripture acknowledges none.

A question of more passages describing an important matter such as a Thousand Year reign on Earth. Outside of Revelation 20 there are no clear literal passages to describe such a time.

**Eschatology is important?** How do we prepare for tomorrow and beyond if we hear conflicting battle horns blowing? How do we interpret a verse such as this in **Matthew 24:22**? *“And except those days shall be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened?”*

**Eschatology is Important?** How is Jesus being portrayed to the world? Victor or Victim?

**Eschatology is Important?** It is all through the Scriptures of The Old and New Testament. Study to show thyself approved, a workman not as ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

To God be the Glory! He cometh! Will we have enough oil for our lamps?



