

## CHAPTER II

### The Millennium--Further Qualifications

*The Millennium is further qualified as (1) an initial stage of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, (2) a period begun by the visible return of Christ in glory to judge and rule the nations, (3) a period closed by the final eradication of all evil from God's universe at the final judgment of the wicked, and (4) a period during which the saints of the first resurrection will be associated with Christ in His reign.*

(1) *The Millennium is an initial stage in the everlasting kingdom of Christ.*

It is inevitable that conflict with the Amillennial view should be engaged at this point.

Amillennialists, in general, hold that the Millennium is a symbol of the present age, that the binding of Satan took place at the beginning of the present age and that he will be unbound a short while before the close of this age.<sup>1</sup> They believe that all the Bible prophecies concerning the prodigious events to take place in connection with the coming of Christ will be seen by the living church before the Rapture. The Rapture is held to be simultaneous with the revelation of Christ in power to judge the wicked nations. The eternal state, without any transitional Millennium, will begin immediately upon the coming of Christ. They also hold that many of the kingdom prophecies of the Bible in Old and New Testaments alike refer to the church in this present, the "Millennial Age."<sup>2</sup> Certainly, they agree, none of them refer to a restored Israel in a future Millennium.

The arguments amassed to support these views fill entire books. The interested student will find them well expressed in able presentations by Murray (*Millennial Studies*), Hamilton (*The Basis of Millennial Faith*), Allis (*Prophecy and the Church*), Geerhardus Vos (*The Teachings of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church*). All of these, except Vos, are recent writers.

It would take another book to respond to the men "blow by blow." But that kind of an answer is not the most convincing, anyway, even if the limitations of this treatise would permit it.

Therefore, I shall confine myself to presentation of the Biblical evidence for the Premillennial view that the Millennium is, indeed, an initial stage in the everlasting kingdom of God.

This can be shown to be true by demonstrating the truth of the following

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1 This period, when Satan is unbound, is assigned by some Amillennialists to Daniel's seventieth week.

2 Keil and Leupold, e.g., hold that the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem in the prophecy of the 70 weeks are symbolical of the New Testament Church.

propositions: *First*, there is an everlasting kingdom promised to Christ (Messiah) in the Old Testament. *Second*, Christ claimed those promises for Himself when He came. *Third*, Christ and the apostles made it clear that in certain important aspects that kingdom was entirely future up to the time of our Lord's ascension and would remain so till the second coming. *Fourth*, the Bible places the future Millennium within that future kingdom, and places it at the very beginning of it.

The first two of these propositions are not opposed by any serious students of any conservative theological school of opinion so I shall merely state them with Bible references and move on to the last two, which are subjects of controversy.

(a) An everlasting kingdom is promised to Christ in the Old Testament. The following clear passages make this evident: Daniel 2:34,35,44; Daniel 7:13,14; Isaiah 11:1 *ad fin.*; Isaiah 65:17 *ad fin.*; Isaiah 66:22 *ad fin.*; Zechariah 14:1 *ad fin.* These are only examples of classes of passages which add up to hundreds of verses.

(b) Christ claimed these promises for Himself when He came. The following passages are cited: Luke 1:31-33; Matthew 1:1-3:7; Matthew 11:2-6. These verses are enough to establish the claim here made. That some spiritualize the Old Testament promises in favor of a different kind of kingdom from that which a literal interpretation gives us, and seek to find support for such spiritualization is not important to the discussion just yet. The fact remains that those Old Testament predictions of an everlasting kingdom for Messiah are claimed for Jesus Christ in the New Testament. To this all believing scholars agree, so far as I know. It is difficult to see how one could be a believer in Christ as Saviour and view the matter otherwise.

(c) Christ and the apostles made it clear that in certain respects that kingdom was still future at the time of our Lord's ascension and would remain so till the second coming.

There are several passages which demonstrate the futurity of Christ's kingdom during His natural life. When He taught His disciples to pray, it was, "Thy kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10), and it was associated with a time when God's will would be done on earth just as in heaven, which from our perspective puts it in the then remote future. When certain of His disciples "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11), our Lord gave a parable which is conclusive in this discussion, and, I think ought to silence forever those who teach that "there is no trace in the Gospels of the so-called chiliastic expectation of a provisional political kingdom," i.e., an earthly millennium of chiliastic kind (Vos, *The Kingdom of God and the Church*, p. 68), and those who say that the church in the present age is the fulfillment *in toto* of the kingdom prophecies to Israel. I cite the parable in part.

*He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We*

*will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received his kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities (Luke 19:12-17).*

Then, after description of further judgment of his professed servants, the parable concludes,

*But those nine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me (Luke 19:27).*

Taken by itself, this proves that our Lord expected a long period of time to transpire, during which His rejection, crucifixion, ascension, and return would transpire before his kingdom should be established. Compare it with the parable of Matthew 25:14-30 and this certainly becomes a double certainty. Nothing else can be derived from a discerning reading of these passages.

That this futurity of his kingdom remained after the death of Christ and before the ascension is indicated by Acts 1:6-8. It will do no harm here to repeat what of necessity has been said often, that when the disciples asked Jesus if He would "at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He made no effort to tell them that such future restoration would not take place, but informed them once more only that it was not for them to know "the times or the seasons." If their expectation of a future restoration of the kingdom to Israel were a false one, then Jesus, who said of the fact that He was going to prepare a place for them, "If it were not so, I would have told you," would likely have corrected their false expectation here.

Then, over half a century after the ascension, John wrote of a day when "the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). This is eschatological prediction, as many of our Amillenarian friends agree. This being the case, it is indeed difficult to avoid the conviction that the kingdom of Messiah predicted in similar terms in Daniel is here, near the close of the Apostolic Age, still in the eschatological future.

Much more could be written on this point, but these facts I deem to be sufficient to establish that "Christ and the apostles made it clear that in certain respects the kingdom was still future at the time of our Lord's ascension and would remain so till the second coming."

I think that some of the modern Premillennialists have gone too far in the direction of making the kingdom of Messiah exclusively future in every respect. Some of these same men have also erred in restricting the future kingdom to the millennium *only*, or at least appearing to do so.

The fact that believers in the present age are "translated into the kingdom" (Col. 1:13), that born-again believers appear to have entered the kingdom of God (John 3:1 ff.), that the course of the present age is traced as the history of "the

kingdom of heaven" (parables of Matt. 13), and that kingdom aspects seem to be attached even to the ministry of the gospel during the church age (cf. Acts 8:12; 15:13-18; 20:24-27; 28:23) forbid that we declare every aspect of the kingdom future.

God is in the present calling out a "spiritual aristocracy," so to speak, who shall have positions of leadership in that future kingdom (cf. Acts 15:14, Luke 22:28-30). These people own Christ as king and are governed even now by the principles of heaven. In that sense the kingdom now promised to Christ is already His. And though it was suffering violence during our Lord's earthly life (Matt. 11:12), and continues to suffer violence from "the violent," who would take it by force (cf. parables of leaven, tares and wheat, etc., of Matt. 13), there is a present aspect of the kingdom. There is an area among saved men on earth where Christ reigns supreme.

But in the full sense the kingdom awaits establishment for the simple reason that the king is absent and away from the scene of that kingdom.

I am acquainted with the fact that some will scoff at what they call a carnal interpretation of the kingdom--with a literal throne, living men as subjects, glorified saints as rulers. But the word carnal has both good and bad senses. Carnal as applied to existence in human bodies and government in literal human ways is not necessarily bad. The Bible never says it is. Carnal as applied to the sin nature and all it stands for is bad. It was Bengel who said,

They who believe that the Millennium is coming will be found to have the true meaning, rather than those who contend that this period present age has been the Millennium; nor do they delay the course of the sun, who speak against it....There is no error, much less danger, in saying that the thousand years are *future*, but rather in interpreting these years, whether future or past, in a carnal sense (*Gnomon of the New Testament*, p. 920).

And if to admit the literal meaning of Revelation 20:1-10, applying it to a future kingdom of Christ on earth, is carnal, then let us all be carnal, for it was Jesus who said to His own disciples: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30). It is small wonder that Vos (*op.cit.*, 70) declares of this that "the words are figurative." His Amillennialism is just simply inconsistent with a literal interpretation. So, wherever a literal interpretation is inconsistent with the system, a figurative one is substituted.

(d) The Bible places the future Millennium within that future kingdom, and places it at the very beginning of it.

This is an important step in our argument--one that I do not recall ever being taken by the Premillennial writers whom I have read. One can prove that there is a Millennium future and that there is a kingdom future, but he must still establish some sort of relationship between the two before kingdom prophecies and Millennial prophecies can be correlated.

Please observe that the view adopted here does not equate the Millennium

and the kingdom. The Bible nowhere does that. Complete identification of the two has given Amillennialists some of their best ammunition (see Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, 236-242). If, as we have shown, the Millennium is a period of only one thousand years, and is specifically the period of time between the two resurrections and the period of Satan's binding, of which period it is affirmed that the saints do reign, then it is not identically the same as the kingdom of Messiah which *lasts forever*.

Now, to demonstrate that the Millennium is within the future kingdom of God on earth and that it is the initial stage of that kingdom, the following four pieces of Scripture information are submitted.

*First*, we are twice informed (Rev. 20:4,6) that the saints reign with Christ during the Millennium.

*Second*, we are also informed in unmistakable terms that when Christ and the saints once *begin* to reign over the kingdom of God on earth they *continue to do so* forever. I refer to the seventh chapter of Daniel. No respectable interpreter of any school (including the unbelieving higher criticism) denies that the one who as "one like the Son of man" takes possession of the kingdom of men, when the history of nations has run its course, is the Jewish Messiah. Of this, Daniel 7:14 says, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Observe that Messiah's "dominion is an everlasting dominion." The Aramaic word here twice rendered dominion is *sholtan*. The evidence furnished by the usage of this word is that it has reference to dominion in the sense of sovereignty (right to rule) rather than of realm (area of rule). It is the word used several times in Daniel of God's sovereignty as well as that of kings and sub-rulers. In this case, then, it is affirmed that Messiah's sovereignty over His kingdom is eternal. Some might object that the word "eternal" can mean only as durative as the nature of the thing it describes, and hence limit the duration. But the verse also affirms that this sovereignty "shall not pass away" and of the realm in which he exercises sovereignty that "his kingdom" is "that which shall not be destroyed." It is hard to conceive of terminology which would more adequately and unequivocally express unending rulership.

Concerning the relationship of Messiah's saints to that kingdom, Daniel 7:18 tells us, "The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom [A.S.V., "receive the kingdom"], and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." Discussion of the Aramaic words used here would only confirm that the strict meaning of the English translation is also the strict meaning of the original. It describes active reception of the kingdom, and rulership in the same, forever. The same is affirmed once more in verse 27 of the same chapter in very similar terms.

Two points have now been established--that the saints will reign with Christ during the Millennium and that when once they begin to reign they do so forever. At this point the temptation is acute to treat the passages which

speak of the close of the Millennial age and others which are *supposed* by some to refer to the close of the Millennial age and which are thought to be in conflict with these views of the continuity and perpetuity of the saint's reign. I beg the indulgence of the reader to let me pursue my argument, believing the clear passages cited to be sufficient to establish my main point. An unpublished paper on the subject, "The Cosmic Dissolution," which I wrote in 1942, treats the objections quite fully. A condensation of that paper appears in Appendix I at the close of this book, for the benefit of the inquiring readers. Premillennialists will find therein a view of the close of the present and of the Millennial age not usually advocated by recent Premillennial writers.

In the *third* place, it follows that since we are told that the saints do reign during the Millennium, and since they continue to reign when once they begin to reign in the kingdom age, there is only one place to put the one thousand years, and that is during the kingdom of Messiah. The facts do not admit of any other possibilities. The Millennium cannot be previous to the kingdom, for the saints will not reign (Amillennialists notwithstanding), as the Millennium passage affirms, until the kingdom is delivered unto Messiah. The Millennium cannot follow it, for the kingdom age never ends. It must be during the kingdom.

*Fourth*, and finally, the Millennium must be placed at the very beginning of the kingdom age, because, once it is settled that it is in the kingdom age of the future, the facts of reason and of the structure of the Book of Revelation will allow no other place for it.

Reason would lead us to assume that when once the kingdom of Christ has been firmly established and been long in process there could be no recrudescence of evil such as takes place late in the one thousand years (Rev. 20:7-10). Neither would it be reasonable to suppose that the final judgment of the wicked at the close of the Millennium should be indefinitely postponed.

But, aside from reason, the structure of the Book of Revelation, whether the parallelistic, continuous-historical, or futuristic interpretation be taken, will allow no place for the future Millennium except immediately after the Son of God returns with His saints as King of kings and Lord of lords. This coming is described in Revelation 19:11-21. Immediately there follows the story of the initiation of the Millennium. Establish the futurity of the Millennium in the kingdom age, as we have already done, and, by any reasonable interpretation, it will fit the structure of this book only at the beginning of the kingdom age.

This will be elucidated in the development of the sections which now follow.

(2) *The Millennium is a period begun by the visible return of Christ in glory to judge and rule the nations.*

It has been seen that the Millennium is an initial stage of the Kingdom and that the inauguration of the Millennium and of the Kingdom are synchronous.

Once this is seen, the establishment of this proposition is only a matter of citing passages. Perhaps the best of all is the second Psalm, which, in unmistakable terms, declares that when Jehovah places His "Son" (v. 12) and sets His "king upon my holy hill of Zion" (v. 6), He will also give His son the "heathen" (nations) for an inheritance (v. 8), and to His king He declares, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Any reader who is in doubt about this matter should read Psalm 72, Isaiah 11, Joel 3, Zechariah 14, and Matthew 25. Nothing that could be written here would be as convincing as the content of these chapters from the Bible itself.

(3) *The Millennium is a period closed by the final eradication of all evil from God's universe at the final judgment of the wicked.*

Premillennialists, in common with all Christian believers, recognize that God will bring every deed of men and angels into judgment. Rewards for good deeds and punishments for evil deeds are a necessary part of a world which Christians recognize as being moral in its constitution and government. That all judgment of believers for evil, judgment in the penal sense, that is, took place at Calvary in Christ, all informed orthodox believers will agree.

It is on the time, place, and circumstances of the final judgment, when believers whose sins already have been punished in Christ are separated from those whose sins must be borne by themselves in an eternal and dreadful hell, that disagreement appears.

Charles Hodge (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, pp. 845-851) lists the following doctrines concerning the final judgment of all men which he says always have been shared by all parties and geographical and ecclesiastical divisions of orthodox Christianity.

1. The final judgment is a definite future event (not a protracted process), when the eternal destiny of men and of angels shall be finally determined and publicly manifested....
2. Christ is to be the judge....
3. This judgment is to take place at the second coming of Christ and at the general resurrection....
4. The persons to be judged are men and angels....
5. The ground or matter of judgment is said to be the "deeds done in the body"....So far as those who hear the gospel are concerned, their future destiny depends on the attitude which they assume to Christ....
6. Men are to be judged according to the light which they have severally enjoyed....
7. At the judgment of the last day the destiny of the righteous and of the wicked shall be unalterably determined.

Now, there is probably small doubt that Dr. Hodge has outlined correctly the general teaching of the church. That his summary is true *in general*, even Premillennialists ought to agree. However, while not fomenting any quarrel over the term, "general resurrection," I insist that Premillennialists should require a different understanding of it to allow a Millennium to stand between

the resurrection of the just and of the unjust. And, if Dr. Hodge means by his seventh proposition that the eternal destiny of the saved man is not "unalterably determined" the moment he puts his faith in a finished work of Christ at Calvary, then Christians of all Millennial persuasions should disagree. I suppose that his meaning is that the eternal destiny is publicly declared at that time.

The essential difference between the three common views of the Millennium in relation to the judgment are as follows:

Postmillennialists believe that there is to be one resurrection of all men to be preceded immediately by the coming of Christ and to be followed immediately by one judgment before which all men shall appear. This resurrection and judgment shall follow an earthly Millennium during which the earth shall be covered with the gospel message and the majority of men will be saved.

Amillennialists believe the same as to resurrection and judgment, except that they, in general, have a more pessimistic view of the course of the world down to the coming of Christ, and deny the existence of any future earthly Millennium.

Premillennialists share the views of Amillennialists concerning the general course of the present age, but disagree on the other details. Premillennialists believe that at the second coming of Christ there will be a resurrection of the saints only, that at His coming He will destroy the wicked living, that the righteous will enter the Millennium to people the earth during the Millennium and that the glorified saints of former ages shall join with a restored Israel in ruling the world during the Millennium. At the close of the Millennium the resurrection and final judgment of the wicked will take place.

This view is not without its difficulties. Premillennialists may be asked where the righteous living shall come from to people the earth during the Millennium if all the righteous are translated at its inception. They may be asked whence arises the rebellion at the end of the Millennium if only saved people enter the Millennium. The parable of the tares and wheat, and of the drag-net in Matthew 13 are presented as objections to a removal of the righteous by resurrection before the wicked are removed in final judgment.

It is the writer's firm conviction that these questions cannot be answered except as the view of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9 herein defended is adopted. A Premillennial system of eschatology without the seventieth week of Daniel (see chapter on the seventy weeks) as the structure of premillennial end-time events is, in my opinion, unable to answer these embarrassing questions of the Amillennial school.

Now, the Premillennialist believes in this order in the end of the affairs of this world primarily because it is taught in Revelation 19 and 20. These chapters present, first, the coming of Christ, then the judgment of wicked men with Antichrist and his false prophet. Now appears the binding of Satan, followed by the thousand years during which saints of a "first

resurrection" are said to reign. At the end--and not till the end--of the thousand years, the judgment of the "Great White Throne" is said to transpire. In this judgment there is not the slightest trace of the presence of saved men, at least not in the capacity of the judged. There is not the slightest evidence that in this judgment even one person shall be declared righteous and sent into eternal life. The wicked among the inhabitants of earth at Millennium's end are led by a released Satan to rebel against God. But they are destroyed by fire from heaven, the devil is cast into the lake of fire, forever, and then these now dead wicked rebels are resurrected together with the wicked dead of all ages to stand before God, and receive condemnation to the everlasting fire of hell which has so recently swallowed their father the Devil. The righteous are not mentioned in the judgment. It must be admitted that they are not expressly excluded. But they do not need to be--the information given in chapter 19 and in 20:1-6 adequately settles the question of their destiny.

But though Revelation 19 and 20 may be the simple basis of the doctrine, it does not want support in other parts of Scripture. That this is the case is admitted even by Carl A. S. Semisch, whose article on "Millenarianism, Millennium" in the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* is one of the most antagonistic and vitriolic to be found in any Protestant literature. Nevertheless, opposed to the doctrine as he was, his admissions very nearly constitute a capitulation. His remarks follow:

There are, however, passages, which if interpreted strictly, and exclusively according to the letter, afford some ground for the millenarian doctrine; as, for example, the sitting at the table with the patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11), the drinking of the fruit of the vine (Matt. 26:29), and the eating of the passover in the kingdom of God (Luke 22:16), etc. Finally, it cannot be disputed that the Book of Revelation (20:44 sqq.) contains the fundamental characteristics of millenarianism. The explanation of Augustine, that the thousand years (Rev. 20:4) had begun before his day is ruled out by the fact that this period is put after the destruction of Antichrist (19:19 sqq.). Nor is the first resurrection (20:4), which is set over against the state of the other dead not yet resurrected (20:12 sqq.), to be explained of the first stage of blessedness in heaven (Hengstenberg), or of regeneration (Augustine). It can refer only to a bodily resurrection (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, art. "Millenarianism, Millennium").

Semisch thus rightly rejects all Amillennial explanations of the separation between the resurrection of the just and unjust by the Millennium. What explanation does he, then, propose? None whatsoever. His quite helpless admission immediately follows:

In view of the difficulty of separating figure from real fact, we conclude that the millenarianism of the Book of Revelation is a hieroglyph, whose meaning has not yet been satisfactorily solved (*ibid.*).

Abraham Kuyper (*The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 275 ff.) is not so frank as Semisch, but quite as unsuccessful in interpreting the one thousand years. After rather vague argument from Psalm 90:4 and II Peter 3:8,10, he reaches the

conclusion that "the 'thousand years' in connection with the Consummation are not a literal but a symbolical indication." An astounding and quite unbelievable declaration then follows:

In other writings a sixfold repetition of a thousand years would require a careful explanation, but such a necessity can never apply to the doings of God, and hence in the Book of Revelation, where it concerns not the doings of men, but of Almighty God, it is out of the question....When we have a writing in hand in which the rule applies that the numbers have no numerical, but a symbolical significance, one has no right to surmise the opposite use of the number, unless this modified use is very clearly indicated.

Such statements are very shocking, indeed, when viewed in their bare meaning. Does not Moses clearly suppose that the six days of God's activity in creating to have been real (cf. Ex. 20:8-11)? Were the seventy years by which God punished Judah by the Babylonian Captivity real and wholly real? Mr. Kuyper is being piddling in his arguments! He is saying that no numerical notation in the Book of Revelation is to be taken literally unless it can be proven to be so! May I insist with all the force that paper and ink can bear when inscribed with words that such reasoning is folly--sheer nonsense--unless we wish to abandon the use of the Bible as a source of information about God and His ways altogether. If the first rule of Bible interpretation, in all of Scripture, is not, "Take the words in the primary grammatical sense unless there are clear contextual reasons for doing otherwise," then we may as well abandon the use of the Bible as a divine revelation. It is not revelation but confusion. These one thousand years are real unless proved otherwise! The reverse of Kuyper's statement is the truth.

Thus, without the slightest hesitation, I return to the proposition: The Millennium is a period (of one thousand years begun by the resurrection of the righteous dead and characterized by the reign of the saints), closed by the final eradication of all evil from God's universe at the final judgment of the wicked. I base this assertion squarely upon the twentieth chapter of Revelation and challenge the opposers to show us why I should not so do.

This doctrine is required also by the twenty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, which has been aptly called "The Little Apocalypse."

That the prophecy is eschatological in its reach is clearly indicated by the last verse in the chapter (v. 23) for it speaks of the time "when the LORD of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." The same is indicated by verse 21, in which of the events described it is said, "It shall come to pass in that day." "In that day" is not uniformly used of the Day of Jehovah, but in the prophecies of the Old Testament is very nearly always so used. In this connection it is certainly so used.

Now, following a description of events (vs. 1-20) which are very nearly exactly duplicated in the judgment predictions of Revelation 6-19, these striking words appear:

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (Isaiah 24:21-23).*

Delitzsch (*Commentary on Isaiah*) says of verse 23: "What the apocalypticist of the New Testament describes in detail in Revelation 20:4, 20:11 sqq., and 21, the apocalypticist of the Old Testament sees here condensed into one fact." And such is precisely the case. We would extend the reference back to verse 1 and say that what the apocalypticist Isaiah sees in one chapter of 23 verses the apocalypticist John sees in 15 chapters (Rev. 6 to 21). It is as Jennings says (*Studies in Isaiah, in loco*), "We must place the two prophecies together in order to correctly understand either."

The crisis of Isaiah's prophecy (vs. 20-23 above) corresponds precisely with Revelation 19:11-21:1 ff. First, the Lord punishes the hosts of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. These "hosts of high ones" can be none other than the angelic spirits of wickedness which in Daniel are seen standing behind the nations of men, and who are represented in Revelation 12:9 as being cast out of the heavens by Michael and his angels into the earth (12:13). Once on the earth they "and the kings of the earth upon the earth" are shortly "gathered together into the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison." This is Old Testament language for incarceration in Sheol or Hades. C. Von Orelli writes of these words (*Prophecies of Isaiah*, 142,143), "The figure is taken from State prisoners, who at first have been imprisoned without regard to the degree of their guilt, but then on the day of judgment are condemned or acquitted according to its extent." This punishment and incarceration is exactly parallel to the destruction of the armies of Antichrist as described in Revelation 19:11 ff., and to the binding of Satan in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1,2). "And after many days shall they be visited," says Isaiah. Orelli translates, "and they are shut up together as captives in a dungeon, and kept in ward, and visited after a long time." The Hebrew *umerobh yamim*, literally, and from a multitude of days, does mean a long time. The visitation described is a divine visitation according to the uniform Hebrew usage, and can be for either deliverance or judgment. In this case it appears that both usages are united in one reference--visitation in the sense of deliverance, because we learn not only from Revelation 20:12-14 but also from I Corinthians 15:22-24 and John 5:28,29 that the wicked dead are to be raised from the dead. But it is a "resurrection of damnation," as John 5:29 specifies, so the sense of visitation for judgment is also involved.

I do not regard this prophecy in Isaiah as mere confirmation of a Premillenarian interpretation of Revelation 20. By itself it requires an explanation of the eschatological future that is similar to, if not identical with, the Premillennial doctrine in the specific length in years, of that period which is at once the final age of time and the first age of the eternal kingdom of heaven and earth. The only specification is that the time be of

some great length, as is required by *robh yamim*, many days. We must refer to Revelation 20 to learn how many days.

(4) *The Millennium is a period during which the saints of the first resurrection will be associated with Christ in His reign.*

This doctrine has been mentioned in several steps of our previous discussions of Millennial doctrines. Now some of the more particular facts must be presented.

There are two principal passages on which this doctrine is based. The earlier is Daniel 7, which reveals that

*the saints of the most High shall...possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever....And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions shall serve and obey him (Daniel 7:18,27).*

For reasons which I shall develop fully in the chapter on the Prophecy of the Four Beasts and the Ancient of Days, I am quite convinced that Gabriel had just one group of saints in view here--saved people from the covenant nation Israel. I am in agreement with Auberlen, who writes:

By the "people of the saints of the Most High," to whom dominion is then to be given (Dan. 7:18-27), Daniel evidently could only understand the people of Israel, as distinguished from the heathen nations and kingdoms which were to rule up till then (2:44); nor have we, according to strict exegesis, a right to apply the expression to other nations; hence we cannot apply it immediately to the church" (*Daniel and Revelation*, 216).

Auberlen then reports that Roos, Preiswerk, Hofmann, Hitzig, and Bertholdt, representing both Millenarian and anti-Millenarian schools of thought in Germany one hundred years ago, are in agreement.

Of the saints' participation in the reign of Christ in His future kingdom there are many direct references in the New Testament. That these who participate are the church of the Pauline epistles there cannot be the slightest doubt. References to such begin at Matthew 5:5 and continue throughout the New Testament. Among some of the clearest references are II Timothy 2:12; Luke 12:32; I Corinthians 6:9,10; I Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:55; James 2:5.

However, the principal passage, that passage in the New Testament which compares in strength and significance to Daniel 7 in the Old, is Revelation 20:4-9. This must now have our consideration:

*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. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 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. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 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. 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."*

With these passages before us, what information do we seem to have about the reign of the saints with Christ? The paucity of information on certain aspects of the question forbids that we make any statements that are very minute in scope. But the following seem to be quite distinctly revealed.

*First*, the saints of both Old and New Covenants shall share in the reign of Christ. I do not intend that this doctrine be construed to mean that all distinctions between the people of God gathered to the Lord in Old Testament times and the Church of Christ gathered to Him in New Testament times are necessarily to be cast away. My views do not coincide wholly with those of some of the brethren of Covenant Theology at this point. On the other hand, the extremes of some of the brethren with a dispensational emphasis, I think, are frequently more in error. However, I do not regard this question as particularly germane to the issue at this point of the discussion. I am merely affirming what Daniel 7 makes clear about Israel and what the many New Testament passages cited above make clear about the church--that both shall share in this reign. I do not know just what the relation of the two bodies will be during the kingdom.

But, in the *second* place, it seems clear that both groups shall be associated in the administration of the reign. The passage in Revelation 20 makes no distinctions, yet does indicate that all shall share in the same resurrection and reigning with Christ. In much the same way that "they also which pierced him" are selected for special mention among the people of the whole world that shall see Christ when He comes (Rev. 1:7), the martyrs are selected by way of eminence among the saints of the resurrection. Resurrection has a special meaning for them (see Rev. 20:4; cf. 6:9-11), just as the appearance of Messiah at His second advent will have a special meaning for the nation that "received him not" at His first advent. However, the fact that the martyr saints of the first resurrection are set in opposition to "the rest of the dead" which "lived not again until the thousand years were finished," all of whom are unsaved and destined for damnation, makes it evident that all the righteous dead from Abel onward are included in this resurrection, and hence also in the life and reign of the Millennium and presumably of the ages to follow (see Appendix II for further discussion).

Two passages in Matthew require this feature--8:11, which speaks of how "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," and 19:28, which informs us that the apostles of the New Testament Church shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the *twelve tribes of Israel* "in the regeneration." It seems that it is in their capacity as apostles and not just as Jews that this shall take place. So he would be a hardy man, indeed, who would dogmatically state just what

distinctions are to prevail between the groups of the redeemed in that day. The author has some opinions, but must confess that they are founded mostly on conjecture.

Now, before we leave this discussion of the characteristics of this last transitional age between time and eternity, the writer would like to venture an answer to the anti-Millennial teaching which has beset these doctrines in modern times. Kuyper, Murray, Hamilton, Allis, Vos (all of the Amillennial persuasion) use different types of rationale and Biblical arguments, but the one most commonly appearing is that the insertion of one thousand years between the beginning of the consummation and the completion of it is out of harmony with the clear passages in earlier portions of the Bible, which are said to teach that the consummation shall transpire in one uninterrupted series of events at the second advent. Kuyper (*The Revelation of St. John*, pp. 271,272) says:

Christ's teachings with respect to this, both in St. Matthew 24 and other parts of the Gospels, contain nothing that even remotely suggests any such interval, and directly contradict it. One does not tally with the other. In the Gospels and apocryphical writings the parousia is not presented as the succession of a series of events of long duration, but as a drastic action which is immediately connected with the resurrection of all the dead, with the last judgment, with the destruction of this world and the rise of a new world on a new earth under a new heaven. It is inconceivable therefore that between the parousia of Christ and the Consummation there would again ensue so tremendous an interval of a thousand years.

Hamilton (*op.cit.* 126) remarks that "other resurrection passages must be torn apart so that this idea, that is, of a millennium, can be inserted somewhere." Others contend that Revelation 20 is obscure and ought to be interpreted in the light of others that are said to be clear.

Now, there is a certain amount of truth to these contentions. The entire picture of the events which shall close human history, as such, is very frequently presented in such a way that one might receive the impression that all would happen at once. This is particularly true of most of the Old Testament prophecies.

But as men so well versed as most of these writers well know, this is due, not to the fact that God made it a matter of revelation that the events were to be of short duration, but to the fact that the element of time simply is not usually present in the prophecy, and *time* was not the subject of revelation.

There have been various ways of describing this characteristic. As to cause, on the human level, the explanation lies in the fact that the prophets were primarily seers, that is, men who *saw* revelations. What they saw they described. But, time is one element that cannot be put in a picture, either of past or future events. The element of space, or depth, is difficult to transcribe on a picture. So, while the prophets were given to know the nature of coming events, they were not usually given the time of them. This feature of Bible prophecy has been frequently called the lack of perspective. Many of

my Premillennial brethren who know this fact have not taken proper cognizance of it and hence sometimes make some incautious (at best) statements about prophecy. Dr. Gaebelien, following Seiss (*The Last Times*, I have lost the page reference), declares that "prophecy is history prewritten" (*The Prophet Daniel*, 1). Pettingill entitles his commentary on Daniel, "*History Foretold*." Now, if history concerns anything it is the precise relations of events *in time* and, that certainly in *past* time. So prophecy, even though it does predict historical events, certainly is not a preview of history taken in the strict sense. Even where time is made a subject of revelation, as for instance in the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 and of the thousand years in Revelation 20, great gaps in chronology are omitted, which disqualify these prophecies for the technically historical character sometimes assigned to them.

Another, and more important, reason why events that turn out to be disparate and successive are presented in prophecy as single and nondisparate, is that it has pleased an all-wise revealing God to make revelation of details of the future progressive.<sup>3</sup> The prophecies of the Old Testament did not make clear that there would be two advents of Messiah. They predicted both the suffering and the glory, and even the order of them, but not the interval which separated and continues to separate them. There were wise reasons for this in the hidden counsels of God. We see some of them now in a way that even our Lord's apostles did not see them till after Jesus ascended into heaven. Somewhere there is a divine decree to the effect that contrary to justice, Messiah be crucified for sins He did not commit, in order that we should not die for the sins we do commit. If Old Testament prophecy had been full and complete and in exact perspective, with reference to this fact, it is doubtful that the decree of God would ever have been carried out. But God's decrees are all carried out--only because the same God who ordains the end ordains also the means.<sup>4</sup> Now, with reference to the atoning death of Christ, the feature of Old Testament prophecy referred to above was one of the means to that end.

Yet prophecy moves onward from Genesis to Revelation. The perspective is improved and the details, even with reference to time, progress toward a complete picture in three dimensions of space and in the fourth dimension, time. All reputable Biblical scholars recognize this fact. As the death of Christ drew near, He explained that He would die, how He would die, how long He would stay dead, and how and when He would rise.

Now, with reference to order of events, and as to the separation of details concerning the close of the ages of time, God's Word in no place lifts the veil completely. There are some questions which will never be settled until history has run its course and time proceeds no longer. But, on the other hand, there are some others on which a little light is given in the early Old Testament prophecies, and still more in the apocalypses of Jesus recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. Then in the Epistles some of these subjects are lifted up for more complete explanation. And, finally, in Revelation a few features are given such complete treatment that not only the nature of certain

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3 In a sense, this is only the face of that truth of which lack of perspective is the obverse.

4 As Dr. A. J. McClain, my teacher of systematic theology, often said, "Contingency of human act is no sign of contingency in the divine plan."

events, but also their precise order and space in time are clearly delineated.

In the opinion of this writer, the order of the resurrections of good and evil is one of these. The relation of the same to the future of Israel, the final Antichrist, and the inauguration of the everlasting kingdom of God on earth are others.

All objections to the literal interpretation of Revelation 20 on the basis of supposed lack of harmony with the nature of Bible prophecy root in a misunderstanding of these basic facts.

Everything about prophecy would teach us to expect that if anywhere some of the enigmas of eschatology would be unraveled, it would be exactly where they are--in the last portion of the final book of Scripture--just a few words from the end of the book, and just before the holy pen of divine inspiration of Scripture would be laid down forever.

Now I proceed to my final proposition in explanation of the Premillennial View.