

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Revelation: God's Revelation To His Servant Today On Events About To Occur **Part IV: "The Things Which Shall Be Hereafter": Events After The Rapture Of The Church** **E. The Millennial Kingdom Of Jesus Christ** **(Revelation 20:1-10)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We at Nepaug Bible Church have long interpreted Revelation 20:1-10 *literally*, believing it teaches Christ will rule for a *literal* thousand years after His Second Coming to the earth, the "Premillennial" view of Bible prophesy.

However, to the contrary, the Roman Catholic Church and mainline Protestant denominations of the Reformed theology tradition view this passage *figuratively* to see it predict the **current Church era between Christ's first and second coming**, the "Amillennial" view that denies a literal future thousand-year reign of Christ. (J. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, 1972, p. 86; John F. Walvoord, The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation, 1976; p. 13)

Of note, handling Scripture figuratively this way has led "Amillennialists" to form other unique beliefs: (a) it has led some Protestant Amillennialists to hold to "Liberal Theology," to deny the resurrection, the last judgment, Christ's bodily Second Coming, the eternal punishment of the wicked, and (b) the Catholic Church has formed its doctrine of limbo where unbaptized infants allegedly go in death and experience no pain, and also its doctrine of purgatory, Ibid., Pentecost, p. 389-390; Loraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 190. (c) "Amillennialism" itself has spawned "posttribulationism" where the Church is held to usher in a golden, thousand-year era followed by Christ's triumphant Second Coming to a Christianized world, Ibid., Walvoord, p. 12-13. That has led to "Dominion Theology" where Christ allegedly bound Satan and his demons at the cross so the Church can set up a political world rule. (Renald Showers, "An Evaluation of Christian Reconstructionism," Israel My Glory, April/May 1991, p. 22-25; religiousmovements.lib.Virginia.edu/nrms/ChRecon.html) "Dominion Theology" attracts globalists who seek a one-world government, men like David Rockefeller, Jr., who said: "Would that I had the power to bring to your minds the vision as it unfolds before me! I see all denominational emphasis set aside . . . (and) the church molding the thought of the world as it has never done before . . . literally establishing the Kingdom of God on earth." (James W. Wardner, Unholy Alliances: The Secret Plan And The Secret People Who Are Working To Destroy America, privately published 1996, as cited in Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 108)

Also, John F. Walvoord noted that today, "the majority of the church" is "following" the "amillennial interpretation" and that even "(a)mong premillenarians" there is "a wide variety of views" that makes "the question as to whether the church, the body of Christ, will go through the tribulation" an "acute" question, Ibid., Walvoord, p. 7.

Need: So we ask, "How do we know whether to interpret Revelation 20:1-10 literally or figuratively, and will we Christians of the Church era have to go through the Great Tribulation period?!"

- I. First, the *BIBLICAL WAY* to INTERPRET Revelation 20:1-10 is the *LITERAL WAY* (as follows):**
 - A. Church History reveals that the Church **initially** largely viewed Revelation 20:1-10 *literally*, but that it **shifted** to adopt the *figurative* method of interpretation **in order to compromise unbiblically with pagan Platonism:**
 1. For its first two centuries, the Church mostly "held that the second advent of Christ would be followed by a thousand-year reign on earth," the *literal* interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10, Ibid., Walvoord, p. 12.
 2. However, the third century "Alexandrian school" in "Egypt" tried to "harmonize systematic theology with Platonic philosophy," an **unbiblical** move made "possible only by interpreting Scripture in a nonliteral sense" to where the literal view of a millennium following Christ's Second Coming was lost, Ibid.
 3. So, Church History argues that the literal view is the initial, uncompromising and hence correct stance.
 - B. Christ interpreted Scripture *literally* at Mark 12:18-27, leading us to interpret Scripture *literally*:
 1. Arguing to Sadducees who held there was no resurrection as the soul ceased to exist at death (Z. P. E. B., v. Five, p. 214), Jesus taught that though dead, the fathers still existed as God was still ["I **am**"] their God.
 2. His argument is based on the historical context of Ex. 3:6 where the fathers were long dead and the *literal* interpretation of the verb "*am*" that is grammatically understood but not written, Kittel, Biblia Heb., p. 81!
- II. If we then interpret Revelation 20:1-10 *LITERALLY*, we arrive at the *PREMILLENNIAL* position:**
 - A. Our study in this series on Revelation led to our seeing Revelation 19:11-21 last week teach Christ's Second Coming, indicating that the events of Revelation 20 occur **AFTER** Christ's *return*, the *Premillennial view!*
 - B. Also, if Revelation 20:4 teaches that the souls of those who had been beheaded for Christ in choosing not to worship the antichrist or to receive his mark in Revelation 13:14-15 came to life and reigned with Christ a

thousand years, such people could thus reign only **after** the Great Tribulation in which the antichrist had slain them and **after** Christ's Second Coming to defeat the antichrist and his kingdom, the *Premillennial view!*

- C. Thus, Revelation 20:1-10 (with other passages) *literally* teaches the *Premillennial view's* sequence of events:
1. Right after Christ defeats the antichrist at Armageddon (Rev. 19:20-21), an angel of God with a key to the bottomless abyss and a great chain in his hand descends from heaven with God's authority, captures Satan, and binds him in the abyss for a thousand years, Rev. 20:1-2. Satan is thus kept from deceiving the nations for Christ's Millennial reign, after which Satan will then be released for a brief time, Rev. 20:3.
 2. Then, thrones are set with people reigning upon them, and these people will include glorified Christians who have returned from heaven with Christ at His coming to rule on earth, Rev. 20:4a with Rev. 5:8-10.
 3. In addition, Old Testament saints will be raised to enter the Kingdom (Daniel 12:11-13) along with martyred saints of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 20:4b), and Matthew 13:37-43 with 24:13, 40-42 reveals believers in natural, un-glorified bodies who survived the Great Tribulation will enter this Kingdom to repopulate the earth while all unbelievers on the earth at Christ's coming are slain.
 4. The rest of the dead, the lost who are part of the second resurrection, "second" in *kind* as **opposed to time** of resurrection, will remain dead until the final judgment, Rev. 20:5-6; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 980.
 5. After Christ's thousand-year Messianic Kingdom, Satan is released to deceive the nations, Rev. 20:7-8a.
 6. The deceived will gather to fight Christ much like the "Gog and Magog" throngs [who fight in the first half of the Great Tribulation period, cf. Ezekiel chs. 38-39], Revelation 20:8; *Ibid.*, p. 981. However, they will be defeated and slain by fire that comes down from God out of heaven, Revelation 20:9.
 7. Having proved through these throngs that man with a sin nature is hopelessly lost even with a perfect environment like Christ's Messianic Kingdom, God's use of Satan will end, and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire where the antichrist and false prophet are to be tormented day and night forever, Rev. 20:10.

III. Our *LITERAL* way of interpreting Revelation **ALSO** implies the **PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE**: our trek through Revelation shows a Rev. 2-3 Church era followed by the Rapture at Rev. 4:1 followed by the Great Tribulation from Rev. 6:1 to 19:21 followed in turn by Christ's return at Rev. 19:11-21.

IV. In further support of the Pretribulation Rapture, 2 Thessalonians 2:6-12 claims the antichrist will be allowed by God to arise in judgment in a world that has **REJECTED CHRIST**, but that since the **CHURCH** is **INNOCENT** of that **SIN**, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 reveals the **Church** is destined for God's **GLORY** at the **RAPTURE!** Thus, Christians are **NOT** to **FEAR** that they will go through the Great Tribulation period, but rather to stay **SETTLED** in life and ministry as they will be raptured **BEFORE** the Great Tribulation period **BEGINS** (2 Thess. 2:15-17), the *PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE* position!

Lesson: Church History and the example of Christ Himself teach the need to interpret not only prophecy, but all Scripture literally versus figuratively. As such, Scripture teaches the Premillennial view of a literal thousand year reign of Christ over Israel and the nations on earth AFTER His literal Second Coming to earth. The Bible also teaches the Pretribulation Rapture of the Church, the believer's Blessed Hope of Titus 2:13!

Application: (1) May we believe in Christ to have eternal life and enjoy the blessing of participating in the Pretribulation Rapture followed by Christ's Second Coming and Messianic Kingdom, John 3:16. (2) May we hold to the LITERAL interpretation of Scripture, that yields the PREMILLENNIAL, PRETRIBULATIONAL view of prophecy, and thus NOT give ourselves to errant "Amillennial" beliefs and practices, but disciple men for Christ's future Messianic Kingdom.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Adopting the *literal* method of interpreting Scripture not only gives us great hope in the Premillennial, Pretribulation Rapture of the Church, but it also provides great **protection** against many spiritually damaging errors. John F. Walvoord noted: "It is rather significant that, without any attempt to establish uniformity in eschatology, the (conservative Protestant) Bible Institute movement of America is predominantly premillennial and pretribulationary," like we are at Nepaug Bible Church. (*Ibid.*, Walvoord, p. 167; parentheses ours) The reason for this widespread, unforced uniformity in belief is the fact that interpreting Scripture *literally* leads believers to **one and only one correct** interpretation of God's Word, so this method of interpreting Scripture shields them from a host of problematic errors!

May we CONTINUE to interpret Scripture LITERALLY and hold to the PREMILLENNIAL, PRETRIBULATIONAL RAPTURE view, serving God in preparation for Christ's FUTURE reign on earth!