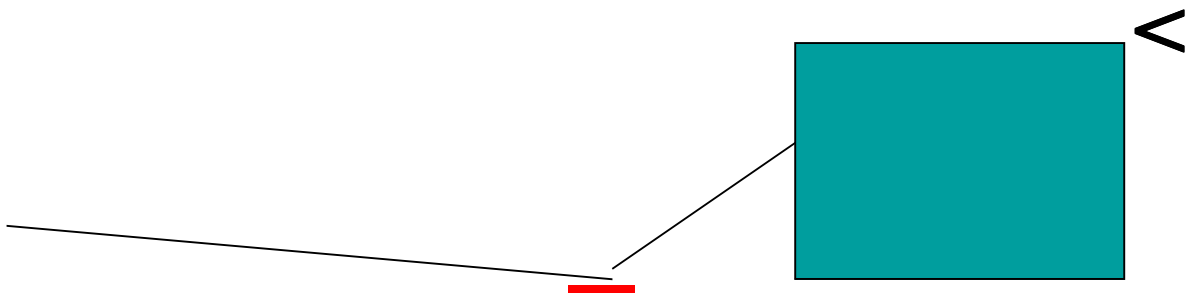


THE MILLENNIUM

PAST, PRESENT, OR FUTURE?



THE BIBLE AND CHURCH HISTORY ON REVELATION 20

by

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THE MILLENNIUM -- Rev. Professor-Emeritus Dr. F.N. Lee

The theological word "millennium" is derived from two Latin words -- *mille* (which means "thousand"), and *ennium* (meaning "year"). Thus, "millennium" simply means "a thousand years." The Greek word *chilia*, meaning 'thousand' -- *chilia*, from which the word 'chiliasm' is derived -- occurs twice in Second Peter 3:8 and six times in Revelation 20:2-7. Yet the word "millennium" itself, appears nowhere at all in the Holy Scriptures.

Introduction to the millennium

The word "millennium" among theologians is generally used to refer to the once-only time during which Satan is imprisoned in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, so that he may then no more deceive the nations of the Earth before the Final Judgment (Revelation 20:1-10). This imprisonment would occur immediately after the Christ and His armies have everywhere spiritually conquered the (Papal) beast and the (Islamic) false-prophet, and thrust them in their unrepentance into the prison of the lake of fire (Revelation 19:11-21).

In the very next verses, Revelation 20:1-10 says John saw God's Angel lay hold of the devil and bind him a thousand years and cast him into the bottomless pit and set a seal on him -- "so that he should deceive the nations no more.... And I saw thrones, and they (the nations) sat upon them and judgment was given to them.... I saw...them...which had not worshipped the beast..., and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.... This is 'the first resurrection'.... And they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign...a thousand years....

"But...the dead did not live, until the thousand years were finished.... And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosened out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations...Gog and Magog, to gather them together.... But fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them, gets cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false-prophet are. And they shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever!"

Now none of the Biblical books is "dispensationally premillennial." That is, nowhere does Scripture teach that after Christ's first coming at His incarnation -- the world would get worse and worse, until He invisibly and secretly comes the second time to "rapture" His Church and then leave our planet under Satan's control for seven years -- till Christ comes again for the third time with His saints to this Earth, in order to bind Satan and to set up His thousand-year reign of peace until Satan is unbound to cause fresh havoc at the very end of that thousand years before God's Final Judgment. No!

No premillennial millennium in the Bible!

The B.C. 4000 to 400 A.D. **Older Testament** -- just like the later Puritans who believed it -- clearly teaches that the **first** coming of the Messiah would be followed sooner or later by a

long period of prosperity here on Earth. Cf. Joel 2:28-32 and Amos 9:11-15 and Isaiah 2:2-20 & 9:6f & 11:6-10 & 49:22f & 60:2-5 & 66:12-23 and Micah 4:1-5 & 5:2-4 and Zephaniah 2:11f & 3:9f and Habakkuk 2:14,20 and Jeremiah 3:16f & 23:5f & 31:31-34 and Obadiah 15-21 and Ezekiel 47:8-12 and Daniel 2:34f,44 & 7:13f,27 and Zechariah 2:4f,11 & 9:9f & 14:9-16 and Malachi 1:11 & 3:3-4,10-12 & 4:1-6.

That prosperous period would occur **prior** to the later simultaneous physical resurrection of the godly and the wicked dead (Job 19:25-27 and Isaiah 26:19 & 28:15-21 & 66:22-24 and Ezekiel 37:1-14). In the Older Testament, it is predicted that this simultaneous resurrection would then occur right before the Final Judgment (Psalm 90:1-10 and Ecclesiastes 12:1-14 and Daniel 12:2-13 and Malachi 3:1-3 & 4:1-6).

According to Bavinck and Hoekstra, not the B.C. 4000f Older Testament but only ancient Babel authored Chiliasm! From Babylon, the doctrine spread into Persia -- giving rise to Zoroastrian Chiliasm around B.C. 1000-500f. There, the Parsees promoted the view of two future physical resurrections -- one of the good, and the other of the bad -- separated by a thousand years.

In Zoroastrian eschatology, the serpent Azi-Dahak is bound inside Mt. Damavend for 9000 years. It then breaks its bonds -- and is only thereafter finally conquered for all time by Fredun, when he awakens from his slumbers. Thus the Zoroastrian *Bundahesh* 29:8 and *Yast* 3:52-60.

Only centuries after Zoroastrianism, *via* the agency of Oriental religions like Mithraism and Mandaeism and Manicheism then popular in the Roman Empire -- this doctrine, through Marcionism and Montanism, influenced the thought of just a few Christians from about A.D. 150 to 310 -- but not at all from then onward till after the 1517f A.D. Protestant Reformation, and not really till from 1830 A.D. onward. Cf. Rev. Professor C.P. Tiele's *Religion of Zarathustra*, and Rev. Dr. William Masselink's 1932 doctoral dissertation *Millennial Kingdom*.

Now after the Older Testament, and between the B.C. 400 to A.D. 33 times of the end of the Older Testament and the start of the Newer Testament, the uninspired Israelitic Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha teach that the then-propheesied soon first advent of the Messiah¹ would in due course be followed by long-lasting earthly blessings.² During that time, Satan would be bound.³ That time of binding would in turn itself be **succeeded** by the contemporaneous physical resurrection of the blessed dead and the wicked dead.⁴ For both the blessed dead and the wicked dead would simultaneously be resurrected physically unto judgment, right prior to the inauguration of the eternal state.⁵

From B.C. 300 till B.C. 5, **before** the Christian Era -- the **Israelites** had lived **close** to the Bible. **No chiliastic** doctrine of two widely-separated physical resurrections can be found in **their** writings **then** -- nor until after some of those Israelites antichristianly **judaized**, by rejecting Jesus in favour of themselves.

A.D. 33-70's Newer Testament (including Revelation chapter twenty) says Christ's Messianic reign will constantly **increase** toward a 'Golden Age.' That reign commenced at His first advent, with His incarnation and His earthly preaching of the Kingdom of God (Matthew chapters 1 to 5; Luke chapters 1 to 4; and Revelation chapters 1 & 5 to 7 & 15:2-4). And that

realm got underway especially at His resurrection from the dead and His ascension and heavenly session (Acts 1:2 to 2:35f and Colossians 1:13-20 and Revelation 1:5,18 & 22:16-19f).

There is **no** trace of Chiliasm in any of the words of **John the Baptizer, Jesus**, or any of the **Apostles**. See Luke 1:76-79 and John 1:1-14 & 3:8 & 4:1,4,14 & 5:4 & 12:31 and Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 2:38f and First Corinthians 15:22-28 and Colossians 1:17-20 and Second Peter 3:8f and Revelation 12:10 & 14:12 & 15:3f & 20:1-6 & 21:23-27 & 22:1-5,11,14,15-20f.

No premillennial rapture at all in Revelation 20:1-15

Since the start of the Newer Testament in A.D. 33-70f, Christ's reign has been expanding continually. It will keep on effecting glorious improvements to the condition of the Earth and its various inhabitants -- until it brings worldwide blessings (Matthew 24:14 & 28:18-20 and Acts 1:5-8 and First Corinthians 15:24-28 *cf.* Revelation 1:5-9 & 12:11 & 17:14 & 20:1f). Then, a "thousand years" after that, in Revelation 20:2-7 -- Christ will physically and simultaneously resurrect the dead saints and the wicked dead (John 5:28f and Acts 24:15 and First Corinthians 15:23 and Philippians 3:20f and First Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 20:13f), unto their final rewards or punishments at the end of history (Matthew 25:31-46 and John 5:27-29 & 6:39f,44,54 & 11:24 and Revelation 20:7-15).

Thus, Revelation 20:4's living and reigning and 20:5-6's "**first** resurrection" refers to a **spiritual** awakening of the **elect** -- whenever they are regenerated by the Gospel-preaching of the Kingdom of God (John's Revelation 20:4-6 *cf.* 3:1). *Cf.* the same John in his Gospel 3:15-18 & 5:21-29 (especially in verses 24f) & 6:40,47 & 8:51 & 11:25 & 20:31. Note too the same John's statements in his Epistle of First John 3:14 & 5:13. See too Romans 6:3-13 & 7:4-9 & 8:6-13 & 11:15, and Ephesians 2:1-6 & 5:14 and Galatians 2:20 and Philippians 1:21 and Colossians 2:12f & 3:1-3 and First Peter 1:3.⁶

However, Revelation 20:5's living again of the "**rest** of the dead" -- refers to a **physical** resurrection at the end of the 1000 years when **all** the dead will rise again **simultaneously**. That physical resurrection will then be for the purpose of God administering rewards or punishments at the Final Judgment. *Cf.* John's Revelation 20:5ab,7-15 & 21:1-4. See too Ezekiel 37:3,8f,12,14 & 38:2,8-23. Also *cf.* John's Revelation 20:12-15 & 21:7f & 22:11f,17-20. It occurs right prior to the start of the eternal state. Revelation 20:7,10-15 & 21:7f & 22:1-5.

Now we must take an even closer look at Revelation 20:1-15. In Revelation 20:1-3 -- the Apostle John says he saw God's Angel grab "Satan...and bind him a thousand years..., so that he should deceive the nations no more." God's Angel binds the devil "a thousand years."

The fulfilment of this, seems to be **yet future**. For, from the broader context, this seems to be a happening which only **starts** occurring **after** the mopping-up operation mentioned immediately before this in Revelation 19.

God's Angel in Revelation 20:1-2, seems to be Christ. For He is the One Who binds Satan (*cf.* Matthew 12:28-29 and Luke 11:20-22). Yet it seems the fulfilment of that period in Revelation 20:1-3f -- is largely **still future**. For Revelation 20:2 apparently refers to an

occurrence which really only **begins** some time **after** Christ ascended into Heaven and then sent His **invisible** Spirit to indwell His Church and use her to **continue** binding Satan for the 1000 years. As taught by the same John -- in his Gospel 14:2,17,26 & 15:26 & 16:7-14.

In Revelation 20:3, the devil is thrown into the bottomless pit for an extended period called a thousand years. This is to stop him deceiving the nations he had previously been deceiving -- while the Gospel now liberates and keeps on blessing those nations right here on Earth.

In Revelation 20:4a, John "saw thrones -- and they sat on them; and judgment was given to them." Who is that "they"? Apparently, verse 3's "nations" are those Satan had previously been deceiving. But now in verse 4a, those subsequently-liberated nations -- "they" -- sit enthroned. Indeed, they are given "judgment" -- and power.

In Revelation 20:4b, this "they" is seen to be the remnant or the successors of "the souls of them that were (previously) beheaded for the witness of Jesus" -- them that "had not worshipped the beast." The perfect passive "beheaded" here indicates this awful persecution was now long passed. It also indicates their persecutors would not futuristically 'nuke' them, but had instead anciently "beheaded" them. Because they "had not worshipped the beast" who since then had been "cast alive into a lake of fire" (Revelation 19:20).

In Revelation 20:4c, the successors of those beheaded saints now "lived and reigned with Christ." Even for "a thousand years." For they now enjoyed their millennial reign here on Earth.

In Revelation 20:5a, we read that all "the **rest**...of the dead **did not live** until the thousand years were finished." This includes especially all unbelievers. **Previously**, those unbelievers had only existed -- but **never** truly "**lived**" (20:4c). Nor would they **ever** really live! Not even at the very end of the millennium. But then, they would only be raised up to exist forever -- even **after** their physical resurrection at the time "the thousand years were ended."

In Revelation 20:5b-6, we are again told of the believers who reign during the millennium. These are they who spiritually revived, when they were born again. "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection! On such, the second death has no power.... They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

In Revelation 20:5a & 20:7-10, we are told what happens when the millennium ends. "The rest of the dead did not live again, until the thousand years were finished...."

"But when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosened out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations...Gog and Magog -- to gather them.... They went up...and surrounded the camp of the saints.... But fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them (Gog and Magog). And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...where the beast and the false-prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Note here that when the rest of the dead rise, the dead nations Gog and Magog rise with them. John says they then surround the camp of the saints. But the saints have already risen therefrom, to be with the returning Christ in the air. First Thessalonians 4:15-17.

Augustine says "these nations...'Gog' and 'Magog' are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the world.... They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil was shut up...in an abyss."⁷

Jonathan Edwards says :There is nothing in the prophecy which seems to hold forth as though the Church actually falls into their hands."⁸ And John Gill says "all the wicked shall be brought out of hell."⁹ For the purpose of then being destroyed!

W. Metzger says many nations appear in the kingdom of the dead (at Revelation 20:5-13). And Mathis Rissi says Revelation 20:7-9 "deals with the kingdom of demonic powers and of the dead.... Satan entices the ghostly nations of the dead.... But the Church is indestructible.... No fresh battle takes place.... John thinks here first of all of 'the dead' in the underworld. Their appearance at the last...reveals their powerlessness, and their appearance at the Last Judgment."¹⁰

In Revelation 20:11-15, we read that then before the great white throne "the dead...stand before God. And the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books.... The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.... Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

However, in the next verses Revelation 21:1-5f we are told about the final destination of those whose names are written in "the book of life" (Revelation 20:12,15). "I saw a renewed Heaven and a renewed Earth.... I, John, saw the Holy City New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven.... I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying: 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men!... They shall be His peoples!'... There shall be no more death!"

Not just "the nations 'of those that are saved' shall walk"¹¹ but apparently **all** "the nations shall walk in the light" of New Jerusalem City, "and the kings of the Earth bring their glory and honour into it.... They shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.... There shall...enter into it...they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:1-27.

Yet, back in Revelation 20:5-15, exactly how would the millennium **end**? This is **the order of God's ten last events**. (1) At the end of the thousand years, the dead live again – Revelation 20:5a. (2) Satan shall be loosened from his prison and go forth not to seduce God's never-having-died but still-living saints, but only "to deceive the nations...Gog and Magog" then just risen from the dead -- Revelation 20:7-9.

(3) The dead-in-Christ shall be resurrected, and then meet the Lord in the air -- First Thessalonians 4:14-16. (4) The bodies of the Gog and Magog dead-in-Satan nations shall be raised, to stand on Earth like zombies while surrounding the camp of the saints -- Revelation 20:5 & 20:8f cf. too Matthew 24:37-41. (5) Then, in a moment, the living saints shall be immortalized and meet the Lord in the air; thus vacating their camp here on Earth -- First Corinthians 15:51-54 cf. First Thessalonians 4:15f and Revelation 20:5-9.

That will then immediately be followed by the remaining events. *Viz.*: (6) the physically-undead wicked, the Gog and Magog, will then surround the vacated camp of the saints

just previously here on Earth -- First Corinthians 15:51f & Revelation 20.8f; (7) fire shall come down from God out of Heaven, and devour Gog and Magog -- Revelation 20:9; (8) the devil who deceived them, gets cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false-prophet are, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever -- Revelation 20:10; (9) the final judgment then takes place here on Earth, involving the punishment of **all** the wicked who have ever lived -- Revelation 20:9-14; and (10) the condemned wicked are then thrust off the Earth into the hellish lake of fire for ever -- Revelation 20:15.

Then the resurrected and immortalized Christians descend through the air with Heaven, down onto the then-renewed Earth. That renewed Earth shall then be their happy future dwelling-place, for ever and ever -- Revelation 21:1-7,10f,24-26 & 22:1-5,11,14.

No Premillennialism after the Bible in the Apocrypha or Church Fathers till 150 A.D.

Now, after completion of the inspired Newer Testament with the inscripturation of the above Book of Revelation, **not even one** of the rather later books of the uninspired so-called "**New Testament Apocrypha**" -- often highly eschatological, and which frequently refer to Holy Scripture and to various doctrines of the Early Christian Church -- ever advocates the chiliastic "two resurrections" theory. For Chiliasm is neither Old-Testamental, Ancient-Apocryphal, Pseudepigraphic, New-Testamental, Neo-Apocryphal, or Early-Patristic. It is a Mid-Patristic **minority viewpoint** -- derived not from the Bible, but back from Zoroastrian Paganism! And where did the chiliastic teaching of the "double resurrection" first come from? Whence arose this teaching of a physical resurrection of the saints, **separated** by a thousand years from a subsequent physical resurrection of the wicked? Not from the Bible -- but from **Babel!**

Centuries later, through the agency of Oriental religions such as **Mithraism** and **Mandaeism** and **Manichaeism** then prevalent in the Roman Empire -- the teaching began to influence the thinking even of some Western Christians. This was the case in pseudo-glossolalic **Phrygia** among its heterodox and 'tongues-speaking' Montanists or Proto-Pentecostals, from the middle of the second century A.D. onward.

But before 150 A.D., none of the Early Church Fathers were Premillennial. Not the *Didache*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Clement of Rome, the Shepherd of Hermas, Ignatius, Quadratus, Diognetus, Pseudo-Clement, Polycarp¹² nor even Papias (properly interpreted!) -- all of whom seem to have been Postmillennial.

Thus the *Didache* (or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) around A.D. 97 reminds both God and Christians: "Let Your **Church** be gathered together from the **ends** of the Earth!... Remember, Lord, Your **Church!**... Assemble it from the **four winds!**... For this is that which was spoken by the Lord: '**In every place** and time, offer to Me a pure sacrifice! For...My name shall be wonderful among the **nations.**'" Malachi 1:11f.

Also the *Epistle of Barnabas* around A.D. 98 declares: "The Scripture says concerning **us** [Genesis 1:28]...:'Multiply and **fill** the Earth!... Have **dominion** over it!' ... **We**, having been quickened and being kept alive by the faith of the promise and by the Word -- shall live, **ruling** over the **Earth**.... To govern implies authority, so that one **should** command and **rule**.... Christ

was the Son of David.... He says [Psalm 110], "The Lord said to my Lord, "You must keep on sitting at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool!"

"And again, this is what Isaiah [45:1f] says: 'The Lord said to Christ, "My Lord Whose right hand I have held -- so that **the nations** shall yield obedience before Him!'"' Thus *Barnabas*, possibly under the influence of *Second Enoch* 32:2 to 33:1 -- and certainly under the influence of Holy Scripture (Genesis 2:1-3 *cf.* Hebrews 4:9-11 & Malachi 4:3-5) -- specifically advocates the future advent of a Golden Age after the first coming of the Lord Jesus and toward the end of the world.

Clement of Rome about A.D. 99 enjoins the godly: "Let us hasten with all energy...to perform **every** good work! For the Creator...formed man...and said: '**Increase** and multiply!' We see then how all righteous men have been adorned with good works.... Let us without delay accede to His will, and let us work the work of righteousness with our whole strength!...

"Concerning His Son, the Lord spoke thus...: 'I will give You **the nations** for Your inheritance, and the **uttermost** parts of the **Earth** for Your possession.... You must keep on sitting at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool!' [Psalms 2 & 110].... Let **us** then, men and brethren, with all energy -- act the part of **soldiers**, in accordance with **His Holy Commandments!**"

Also the **Pastor of Hermas** wrote around A.D. 100: "**Increase** and **build up** and **rule over the whole creation!**... The building...**will** be finished.... **When** the tower is **finished** and built -- **then** comes the **end**.... I was met by a Beast of such a size that it could destroy peoples [Revelation 13:3f]. But through the power of the Lord and His great mercy, I escaped from it.... It will be possible for **you** to escape it, if your heart be pure...and you spend the rest of the days of your life in serving the Lord.... Cast your cares upon the Lord, and He **will** direct them! Trust the Lord!... For He is **all-powerful!**"

Ignatius said in 107 A.D.: "**Victory** over death was obtained in Christ.... **Stand firm**, like an anvil which is beaten! It is the part of a noble athlete to be wounded, and **yet** to **conquer!**... Run your race with **increasing** energy! Weigh the times carefully! While you are here, be a **conqueror!**"

The **Epistle to Diognetus** declared about 130 A.D.: "The Christians, though subjected day by day to punishment, **increase** the **more** in number.... Do you not see them exposed to the wild beasts so that they may be persuaded to deny the Lord? And yet, **they are not overcome!** Do you not see that the **more** of them who are punished, the **greater** becomes the number of the **rest?** This does not seem to be the work of man. This is **the power of God!**"

Papias, who flourished around 145 A.D., was a Disciple of that very great Postmillennialist, the Apostle John¹³ -- who wrote his non-dispensationalistic Gospel (John 5:24f) and his Book of Revelation (20:1-15). Papias never advocated the chiliastic doctrine of the "double resurrections" -- although both he and Barnabas did, of course, refer to the different and Scriptural doctrine of the Earth's **future Golden Age**.¹⁴ In actual fact, both Barnabas and Papias were -- in the technical sense -- not Premillennialists but **Postmillennialists** (alias **Consistent**

"Amillennialists"). Thus, as far as Papias (properly interpreted!) is concerned, the later Postmillennialist Eusebius.¹⁵

No Dispensational Rapturism even in Justin and Irenaeus and Tertullian

Now with the exception of the later Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian -- none even of the subsequent major Church Fathers were Premillennial. Yet rather sadly, the eschatology of the non-glossolalic and largely-orthodox Justin and Irenaeus were indeed so influenced -- and Tertullian became infected even with Semi-Montanism, at least for quite a while.

Their views even in other theological areas (such as soteriology, sacramentology and ecclesiology) were somewhat tinged with errors¹⁶ (of which they themselves seem to be unaware). Yet their Premillennialism was clearly devoid of Dispensationalism, and even somewhat influenced by Postmillennialism. The same may be true also of the later lesser Premillennialists the 240 A.D. Commodian, the 250 A.D. Egyptian Bishop Nepos, the 260 A.D. and now almost unknown Coracion, and the 310 A.D. Lactantius. But we should first look more closely at Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian.

Now the post-apostolic "Christian Chiliasm" of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian had nothing to do with their expectation of the arrival of a future **earthly Golden Age**. For that was revealed from the **beginning**. Genesis 1:28 to 2:24 and Psalms 72 & 89 and Isaiah chapters 40 to 66 and Ezekiel chapters 40*f* and Amos chapter 9 and Micah chapter 4 and Habakkuk chapter 2 and Haggai chapter 2 and Zechariah chapters 6 & 9 & 14 and Malachi chapters 3 & 4.

For even the Pre-Christian **pagan** ideas of a Golden Age, are but (perverted) **remnants** of God's **original revelation** to all men prior to the Great Flood and the Great Dispersion from the Tower of Babel onward. We mean ancient heathen accounts -- such as the *Merneptah Legend* in Egypt; the Babylonian *Codex Hammurabi*; the Assyrian prosperity of Assurbanipal; the Zoroastrian 'Golden Age'; the Elysian fields of Greek mythology; Virgil's Pagan-Roman 'millennium'; Stoic and Epicurean futurologies; the 'Cargo' religions of the South Pacific; and even modern Humanism's idyllic or mechanized Utopias.

Those remnants were subsequently kept alive by God's **continuing general revelations**, in various ways, to all men. Genesis chapters 1 to 11 and Job 32:8 and Acts chapters 14:15-17 & 17:23-28 and Romans chapters 1 & 2. All of man's corrupt receptions of ongoing general revelations are to some extent based upon (and perversions of) God's original and ongoing special revelations of the Paradise tradition with its promise of a future 'Paradise Regained.' Genesis 2:1-3 & 2:15-17 & 3:17-22 and Isaiah chapters 11 & 65 & 66 and Hebrews 4:9-11 *cf.* Revelation 2:7 & 14:13 & 20:1-6 & 22:2

It was only from the middle of the second century A.D. onward, that the Babylonian-Persian **chiliastic** idea of two widely-separated physical resurrections began to expand even on the fringes of the **Christian Church**. First it influenced Sub-Christian groups like the Cerinthians, the Ebionites, and the Montanists -- *cf.* too the modern Mormons, Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, and Jehovah's witnesses. And then it ultimately influenced even some of the authentically-Christian groups themselves.

The first authentic Christian thinker writtenly advocating "chiliasm" -- was Justin Martyr the Samaritan. This was around 150 A.D. Yet even Justin **only sometimes** advocated "Chiliasm" -- and, indeed, a kind of "Chiliasm" quite unlike that of modern Premillennialists.

See Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapters 80f. Note that the Samaritan Justin's "Chiliasm" -- derived from the East (Second Kings 17:24f) -- was chiefly motivated only by his desire to 'christianize' the 'chiliasticized' Jew Trypho.

Unlike our modern Chiliasts, Justin believed that Christ would give the 'Holy Land' to all Christians (be they converts from the Judaists or from the Gentiles). And he also believed that they would reside there for an eternal or never-ending "thousand years" -- during which "time" believers would be immortal(-ized) permanently. See his *Dialogue* chapters 39, 45, 113, 121, 132 & 139.

Moreover, Justin always acknowledged that **Chiliasm** was only one of a number of opinions held among those early Christians -- noting that "**many** who belong to the pure and pious Faith and are True Christians, think **otherwise**." This means he did not regard his own chiliastic opinion as a test of orthodoxy, but freely admitted that "**many**" of "the pure and pious" among the "**True Christians**" think "**otherwise**."

So then -- after the first Post-Apostolic non-premillennial Church Fathers wrote their *Didachee*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Clement of Rome, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the writings of Ignatius, Quadratus, Diognetus, Pseudo-Clement, Polycarp and Papias -- the A.D. 150 Justin Martyr was the first 'Christian Chiliast,' at least occasionally, in some of his writings. It must be remembered that, before his conversion, he had been a Samaritan.

The Samaritans had an unorthodox theology, which they had derived in part from the Pagans near Assyria and Babylonia, the matrix of Chiliasm. Second Kings 17:24f and Ezra 4:1f & 9:1f cf. John 4:9-22. Some of those views may well have carried over into an 'Occasional Chiliasm' in Justin -- even after his conversion to Christianity.

Justin's 'Occasional Chiliasm' *sui generis* -- which was strongly anti-pretribulationistic -- was followed possibly by Pothinus in A.D. 175 and more probably (around 185) by Irenaeus in his *Against Heresies* V:33:4. Around 220, there were **some** similar influences on Tertullian -- though only with very important and extremely **optimistic** if not perhaps even **postmillennial** implications.

It is true these few Christian leaders advocated the chiliastic teaching of "two resurrections." Yet they differed from modern Premillennialists in many ways. They denied that, since Calvary, the Jews are in any way "God's Chosen People." They also denied the Jews would return to Palestine (and even today most have not). And they were all **anti-pretribulationistic**.

Thus, Justin Martyr believed the **Gentile** Christians would ultimately live in Jerusalem. Irenaeus was an **Anti-Judaistic** Covenant Theologian. Tertullian expected a **massive worldwide conversion of the Gentiles** prior to the millennium. And Commodian believed in establishing the New Jerusalem **before** the millennium. What modern Dispensationalist would agree?!

Justin also preserved many of the emphases of the **Postmillennialism** of the Christian Church **before** his time. Thus, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* 109-10, he taught "that the **Gentiles would repent**.... The prophecy of Micah [4:1f]...is as follows: 'In the last days, the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, established on the top of the mountains. It shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And **many nations** shall go and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the House of God!"'"

Justin adds: "It is plain that, though beheaded and crucified and thrown to wild beasts and chains and fire and all other kinds of torture, **we do not give up** our confession! But the more such things happen, the **more** others and **larger** numbers become faithful and worshippers of God through the name of Jesus."

Significantly, there is no chiliasm whatsoever in Justin's *Fragments of the Lost Work of Justin in the Resurrection*. Indeed, even in the main thrust of his *locus classicus* on chiliasm within chapters 80f of his *Dialogue with Trypho* the chiliasticized Judaist -- Justin simply says: "There will be a resurrection of the dead.... In short, the **eternal resurrection** and judgment of **all** men would likewise take place."

Only in some parts of his writings (such as *Against Heresies* V:33:4f), does the A.D. 185 **Irenaeus** lean toward the erroneous "two different physical resurrections" teaching. Elsewhere, he argues in favour of **one simultaneous physical resurrection of both the godly and the wicked**. Thus, in his *Heresies* (V:13:1 & V:24:2 & V:35:1), he writes that Christ "Himself declares: 'The **hour** shall come in which **all** the dead who are in the **tombs** shall hear the voice of the Son of man and **shall come forth** -- those who have done **good** to the resurrection of life, and those that have done **evil** to the resurrection of judgment' [John 5:28]."

Yet again, Irenaeus seems to acknowledge that Revelation 20:5b's "**first** resurrection" is purely **spiritual** -- and that only that which some term the '**second** resurrection' is **physical**. "This," he insists, "is what the Lord declared: '**Happy** are those servants whom the Lord, when He comes, shall find watching' [Luke 12:37f].... Again, John also says **the very same** in the Apocalypse: 'Blessed and holy is he who has part in the **first** resurrection' [Revelation 20:6].... '**After** these things, the Lord shall remove **us** men far away -- and **those who** remain **shall multiply upon the Earth**' [Isaiah 6:11]."

Now "all these and other words," explains the **Anti-Pretribulationist** Irenaeus, "were unquestionably spoken in reference to the **resurrection** of the **just**. This takes place **after** the coming of Antichrist...in [the times of] which [resurrection] the **righteous** shall reign on the Earth...[with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh awaiting Him from Heaven and **who have suffered tribulation as well as escaped** the hands of the wicked one."

Indeed, in Fragment XII of Irenaeus preserved in the *Parallela* of John of Damascus, one even reads "that [our] bodies also do rise again" -- and "that to **each** body its own soul shall be restored.... It shall not receive bodies diverse from what they had been," but rather "as they departed this life in sins **or** in **righteous actions**.... Such as...were in **unbelief**..., shall...faithfully be **judged**." Where **here** is there then **any** teaching of **two** different physical resurrections?!

Was **Tertullian** a premillennialistic Chiliast -- or a Historic **Postmillennialist**? Probably, he was a rare mixture of both!

At times, in his *Monogamy* 143 and his *Hermogenes* 11, he speaks of eternity as following **immediately** after the **resurrection**. Even his *Against Marcion* III:25, while indeed teaching the resurrection of the just "sooner or later" and "within" the thousand years, nevertheless says nothing about the resurrection of the unjust unto damnation at the end of the thousand years.

He says: "We do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the Earth..., though only in another state of existence.... It will be after the resurrection for a thousand years.... After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints who rise sooner or later..., there will ensue the destruction of the World and the conflagration of all things at the judgment."

All of this is, of course, quite reconcilable with **non**-chiliastic views. Indeed, Tertullian's *Apology* 23 seems to indicate he believed Jesus was coming to judge all people **simultaneously**. Also Tertullian's frequently-quoted work *Shows* 30, does not really establish that he was chiliastic.

"**After** the casting of the devil into the bottomless pit for a while [Revelation 20:2]" -- explains Tertullian -- "the blessed prerogative of the **first** resurrection may be ordained from the thrones [Revelation 20:4-6].... Then again, **after** the consignment of him to the fire [Revelation 20:10]..., the judgment of the **final** and **universal resurrection** may be determined out of the books [Revelation 20:12-14]."

Yet perhaps his work *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 25, taken in conjunction with his *Antidote for the Scorpion's Sting* 12, does imply **some** or other unique kind of 'chiliasm.' However, even that is not **absolutely** clear. For it does not unimpeachably teach that the **first** resurrection is **physical**.

In his *Resurrection of the Flesh* 25, Tertullian seems to reject chiliasm. He says: "The very maintenance of this **spiritual** resurrection, amounts to a presumption in favour of the other **bodily** resurrection. For if none were announced for that time -- there would be fair ground for asserting **only** this 'purely **spiritual** resurrection.'

"Inasmuch, however, as (a resurrection) **is** proclaimed for the **last** time -- it is proved to be a **bodily** one, because there is **no spiritual** one also **then** announced. For why make a **second** announcement of a resurrection of only one character -- that is, the **spiritual** one -- since this ought to be undergoing accomplishment either **now**, without any regard to different times, or else **then** at the very conclusion of all the periods? It is therefore more competent for us even to maintain a **spiritual** resurrection at the **commencement** of a **life of faith** -- we who acknowledge the **full completion** thereof at the **end** of the world!"

Furthermore, in his *Resurrection* 24, Tertullian rejected the 'any moment return' of Christ to this Earth of all Dispensationalists and most Premillennialists. For he denied that Christ would come again, **until** after the Pagan Roman State had first fallen. The latter would only start occurring fully a century after his death, at its nominal christianization in A.D. 321 and further

at its yet-later demise into ten kingdoms (in about A.D. 500f) after the A.D. 476 overthrow of the Western Roman Empire by the barbarians. For only then would Antichrist (*cf.* the Romish Papacy from A.D. 606 to 666 onward) start to be introduced upon the awful and bleak ruins of the Roman Empire.

On Tertullian's anti-dispensationalistic **eschatological optimism** regarding the **successful** course of the Gospel in our **present** world here and now, he says in his *Against Marcion* V:10: "'**All** kings shall fall down before Him.... **All nations** shall serve Him.' To Whom shall **all** thus do homage, but to Christ?... In Solomon was **no** nation blessed; in Christ, **every** nation!"

Tertullian also writes in his *On the Veiling of Virgins* I: "The Lord sent the Paraclete...so that...**discipline** should, **little by little**, be...carried on to **perfection**.... What then is the Paraclete's administrative office but this -- the **direction** of discipline; the **revelation** of the Scriptures; the **reformation** of the intellect; the **advancement** toward the '**better** things'?"

No Post-Tertullianic Premillennialism till Lactantius

Tertullian sounds optimistic, if not even Postmillennial! Nearly all of the Ante-Nicene Fathers after Justin *etc.*, seem to have been Postmillennial. Thus Tatian, Theophilus, Melito, Apollinarius, Hegesippus, Athanagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Caius, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius, Cyprian, Methodius, Victorinus, Eusebius and the writers of the 310 A.D. *Apostolic Constitutions* -- despite having lived through horrible persecutions of Christianity. And, after the last Premillennialist Lactantius, from the christianization of the Roman Empire from A.D. 315 onward there were no Premillennialists in the Church at all -- until the A.D. 1523f time of the Post-Reformation Anabaptists.

The A.D. 165 **Tatian** was strongly anti-premillennialistic. Thus he insisted in his *To the Greeks* VI: "**We** believe that there will be a resurrection of **bodies** **after** the consummation of all things.... A resurrection **once and for all**, when our periods of existence are completed -- and in consequence solely of the constitution of things under which men alone live. **For the purpose of passing judgment** upon them!"

The A.D. 183 Apologist **Athenagoras** is clearly anti-chiliastic. "It is not our belief alone," he argues (in his *Plea for the Christians* 31 and his *The Resurrection of the Dead* 14,18,23 & 25) "that bodies will rise again.... Many philosophers also hold the same view.... Nothing hinders according to Pythagoras and Plato, that when the dissolution of bodies takes place -- they should from the very same elements of which they were constructed at first, be reconstructed.... All human beings who die, rise again.... All are to rise again -- those who have died in infancy, as well as others.

"It will be well to prove our proposition, by...the reward **or** punishment due to each man in accordance with righteous judgment.... Man must also bear the recompense for the sins committed...: such as adultery, murder, theft, rapine, dishonour to parents, and every desire in general that tends to the injury and loss of our neighbours.... There must by all means be a resurrection of the dead bodies.... The **reward** or **punishment** of lives ill or well spent."

Wrote Clement of Alexandria in A.D. 190, quite anti-chiliasmatically in his *Miscellanies* VI:18 and his *Fragments from the Latin Translation of Cassiodorus* I:1: "The word of our Teacher [Jesus Christ] did not remain in Judea **alone**.... But it was diffused over **the whole world**, over **every** nation and village and town -- already bringing whole houses over to the truth.... Our doctrine at its very first proclamation was prohibited by kings and tyrants.... But it **flourishes** the **more**.... The Father of our Lord by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...**rises again** in **us**.... In the resurrection, the soul returns to the body, and both are joined to one another."

The A.D. 210 Caius of Rome was even more anti-chiliasmatic. In his *Fragments* I:1f he said that the Gnostic heretic "Cerinthus through 'revelations'...would have us believe (that they) were written by a great Apostle." Cerinthus "brings before us 'marvellous things' which he pretends were shown him by Angels -- alleging that **after** the resurrection...the flesh dwells in Jerusalem.... And, being an enemy to the Scripture of God -- wishing to deceive men, he says there is to be a space of a thousand years for marriage festivals!"

The A.D. 230 Origen was clearly **postmillennialistic**. Wrote he in his *On the Fundamentals* I:6:1 & II:11:2f & III:6:1 and in his *Against Celsus* 8:68: "Thus says Holy Scripture: 'The Lord said to My Lord, "Keep on sitting at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool!" [Psalm 110:1].... For Christ must keep on reigning until He has put all enemies under His feet.... **All things must be put under Him**' [First Corinthians 15:25-27f].... The Lord Himself in the Gospel...declares that these same results are **future**.... They are to be brought about by His Own **intercession**" -- and **not** by His final visible **Parousia**! "Thus the divine likeness itself already appears to **advance**" -- toward its eschatological goal.

Origen further stated in his *Against Celsus*: "It is evident that even the barbarians, when they yield obedience to the Word of God, will become most obedient to the Law.... Every form of worship will be destroyed except the Christian Religion, which alone will prevail. And indeed it will one day triumph -- as its principles take possession of the minds of men more and more every day!"

The A.D. 235 Hippolytus wrote about Revelation 20:7f in his eschatological *Fragments* regarding the loosening or unbinding of Satan at the very **end** of the millennium. "This unbinding of Satan," says Hippolytus, "does **not** mean that he will then enjoy a time of renewed activity -- but that he and his followers will then be thrown into the fire!"

It is sometimes claimed the A.D. 258 Cyprian was a Chiliast. Such claims are not true. Cyprian was not a Premillennialist. For in his *Tostatus* 28 I,44f,76 -- he clearly believed that Christ's **next** coming would immediately be followed by the **Final Judgment**.

Wrote Cyprian in his *Epistle* 55(58):2,5,8 and his *Treatise* XII (1 Test. 20 & 2 Test. 7) **during a time of great persecution**: "Let us be **armed**, beloved brethren, with our **whole** strength! And let us be prepared for the struggle with an uncorrupted mind; with a sound faith; with a devoted courage! Let the camp of God **go forth** to the **battlefield** which has been appointed to us!"

"Let the **sound** ones be **armed** -- lest he who **is** sound, should **lose** the **advantage** of having stood lately! Let the lapsed also be armed -- so that even the **lapsed** may **regain** what he has

lost...; taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be **able to quench** all the fiery darts of the wicked one.... **The Church**, which before had been barren, will have **more** children from among the **Gentiles**.... Christ our **God**...[is] the **Enlightener** and Saviour of the **human race**."

Nor was the A.D. 300 **Methodius** a Chiliast. For in his *On the Resurrection* I:8 and his *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* IX:3 and his *Symposium* IX:1-3, he too believed that the resurrection would immediately be followed by Judgment Day -- and then by the eternal state.

It was **Victorinus** who, **right after the fiercest-ever persecution of Christians**, in A.D. 300 wrote the first extant *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. It is clearly **anti-chiliastic** -- and **postmillennialistic**.

Wrote Victorinus on Revelation 6:1-2: "The first seal being opened, he [the Apostle John] says he saw a white horse, and a crowned Horseman having a bow.... After the Lord ascended into Heaven and opened all things, He sent the Holy Spirit Whose words the Preachers sent forth like arrows, reaching to the human heart -- so that they might **overcome unbelief**.... For [in Matthew 24:14] the Lord says: 'This Gospel shall be preached **throughout the whole World** for a testimony **to all nations**.'"

Victorinus further added on Revelation 20:1-5: "Those years in which Satan is bound, are at the **first** advent of Christ even **to the end** of the **age**. And they are called a **thousand**, according to that mode of speaking in which a part is signified by the whole -- just as is that passage 'the Word which He commanded for a thousand generations' (although they are not a thousand)....

"He says that **he** [Satan] is bound and shut up, so that he **may not keep on seducing the nations**. 'The **nations**' signifies the **Church** -- seeing that **it** is itself **being formed** from **them**.... The '**first resurrection**' is **now**, of the **souls** that are by the faith which does not permit men to pass over to 'the second death.' Of **this** resurrection, the Apostle says: 'If you **have** risen with Christ -- **keep on** seeking those things which are above!'"

The 310 A.D. **Lactantius** has many idiomatic graces in his writings. But when unclothed of these, he becomes sadly transformed and rather confused!

In his *Divine Institutes* (7:14f & 7:22), Lactantius declares: "Let the philosophers who enumerate thousands of ages from the beginning of the world, know that the six thousandth year is not yet completed.... Since all the works of God were completed in six days, the world must continue in its present state through six ages -- that is, six thousand years. For the great Day of God is limited by a circle of a thousand years. As the Prophet shows who says: 'In Your sight, O Lord, a thousand years are as one day' (Psalm 90:4 and Second Peter 3:8).... As God laboured during those six days in creating such great works, so His religion and truth must labour during these six thousand years while wickedness prevails and bears rule....

"At the end of the sixth thousandth year, all wickedness must be abolished from the Earth and righteousness reign for a thousand years.... As a mortal and imperfect man was formed from the Earth (Genesis 2:7) so that he might live a thousand years in this world -- so now from this earthly age is formed a perfect man, so that being quickened by God he may bear rule in this same

world through a thousand years.... The Roman name by which the world is now ruled, will be taken away from the Earth and the government return to Asia. And the East will again bear rule, and the West will be reduced to servitude....

"The dead will rise again. Not after a thousand years from their death. But so that, when again restored to life, they may reign with God a thousand years. For God will come, so that having cleansed the world from all defilement -- He may restore the souls of the righteous to their renewed bodies and raise them to everlasting blessedness."

Indeed, at the end of his *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* (72), he adds: "Christ shall descend with great power, and there shall go before Him a fiery brightness.... All that multitude of the wicked shall be destroyed.... The prince of the demons himself..., being bound with fiery chains, shall be imprisoned -- so that the world may receive peace and the Earth, harassed through so many years, may rest....

"That righteous King and Conqueror (Christ) will institute a great judgment on the Earth respecting the living and the dead, and will deliver all the nations into subjection to the righteous who are alive -- and will raise the righteous dead to eternal life and Himself reign with them on the Earth and build the Holy City. And this Kingdom of the righteous shall be for a thousand years....

"But when the thousand years shall be fulfilled and the prince of the demons loosed, an innumerable multitude will come to storm the city of the saints. Then the Last Judgment of God will come to pass against the nations.... The righteous shall for a little space be concealed under the Earth, until the destruction of the nations is accomplished. And after the third day, they shall come forth and see the plains covered with carcasses.... After these things God will renew the world and transform the righteous into the form of angels -- so that, being presented with the garment of immortality, they may serve God for ever.... This will be the Kingdom of God, which shall have no end. Then also the wicked shall rise again, not to life but to punishment."

One can sympathize that Lactantius wrote this right after a period of bloody persecution of Christians, and just before the Roman Empire received Constantine as its first Christian Emperor. Yet, as Calvin later commented on Second Thessalonians 2:1, "the ravings of Lactantius and the Chiliasts were highly acceptable in a former period. Their only purpose, however, was to destroy the hope of the resurrection. This was not the intention of Lactantius, but Satan in his artfulness misdirected the curiosity of this man and those like him, so as to leave nothing left in religion that was precise or definite!"

No Premillennialism from the 313 A.D. Constantine till after the 1517f Luther

After the A.D. 313 accession of **Constantine** as the first Christian Emperor in Rome, the previously-persecuted Church was greatly advantaged. Exulted **Eusebius** around 321f A.D. in his *Church History* X:2:1 to X:4:9: "Especially we who placed our hopes in the Christ of God, had unspeakable gladness.... A certain inspired joy bloomed for all of us -- when **we** saw **every** place (which shortly before had been desolated by the impieties of the tyrants) **reviving** as if from a long and death-fraught pestilence, and **temples again rising** from their foundations to an

immense height and receiving a splendour far **greater** than the old ones which had been destroyed.... 'For the Lord remembered us in our low estate, and **delivered** us from our adversaries!' (Psalm 136:23f)."

None of the Early Church Fathers -- from the A.D. 66f Apostles John and Barnabas down to the A.D. 321f Eusebius -- would feel at home among modern Pretribulationists (of whatever variety). After the **nominal christianization of the Roman Empire** by the first Christian Emperor Constantine in A.D. 321f -- even the anti-pretribulationist kind of 'Christian Chiliasm' of Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian died out for more than twelve centuries.

It was hardly ever heard of again. Until revived not by the Lutheran and Calvinistic Protestants but instead by the Non-Protestant Dutch Anabaptists Hoffmann, Matthijs, Beukelssen, Joris, Nicholas, and Menno Simons.

From the time of John's Revelation in A.D. 66f down to the time of Justin Martyr almost a century later, there is **no trace of Chiliasm** in any of the extant writings of Christian Scholars. Though "Christian Chiliasm" did have a few genuinely-Christian advocates between the times of Justin Martyr in A.D. 150 and Lactantius in A.D. 310, it had few even at that time. And it had **none whatsoever** in the many centuries since Constantine until well beyond the very end of the Late Middle Ages.

So-called 'Amillennialism' -- is really Postmillennial. For it too rightly says Christ will return visibly to resurrect all people simultaneously unto Final Judgment -- only at the **end** of the millennium (however conceived). Even if modern 'Amillennialists' do not wish to be called Postmillennialists -- all of them, and also Premillennialists too, need to know that **each and every Early Church Father before the A.D. 150 Justin Martyr -- was a non-chilistic Postmillennialist** (whether **consistently optimistic** or whether **somewhat less hopeful**). So too were most Church Fathers from Justin till Tertullian, as well as every Church Father from A.D. 230 until A.D. 300 (from Origen of Caesarea to Victorinus of Pettau).

So too was each and every Early Church Father from the A.D. 321f Eusebius onward -- such as Athanasius, Aphrahat, Ephraim, Basil, Hilary, Cyril, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Sulpicius Severus, Jerome, Augustine, Vincent of Lerinum, and Gregory the Great. So too were Bede of Yarrow, Alcuin of York, Bruno of Segni, Anselm of Canterbury, Joachim of Floris, Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, Pierre d'Olivi, Ubertino of Casale, John Wycliffe, Matthias of Janow, Nicholas de Cusa, Savonarola, and Christopher Columbus. So too were **all** of the Protestant Reformers -- including Luther and Calvin.¹⁷

An extended treatment of Revelation twenty is given by Augustine of Hippo-Regius. Formerly, while and after being an Anti-Christian Manichaeon, he himself had toyed with chiliastic Premillenarianism. But after his conversion to Christ, in his A.D. 413-426 masterpiece *The City of God* (18:47f & 20:6-13 & 22:1) he wrote *inter alia* the following.

"The Church of Christ has everywhere **increased**. This House of God is **more** glorious than the first one which was constructed of wood and stone.... The glory of **this** House is **not** so apparent **now** as it **shall** be -- when **everyone** who is there, shall be there **always**....

"There are...two resurrections.... The first and spiritual resurrection...takes place in **this** life, and preserves us from coming into the second death. The second (resurrection) does not occur now but at the end of the world; and...is of the body, not of the soul.... The Last Judgment shall dismiss some into the second death; others, into that life which has no death....

"Those who...have suspected that 'the first resurrection' is **future** and **bodily**..., surpass the measure of credulity itself. Such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them, are called by the spiritual 'Chiliasts' -- which we may literally reproduce by the name '[Pre-]Millenarians'....

"The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, 'No man can enter into a strong man's house and despoil his goods, except He first bind the strong man' (Mark 3:27) -- meaning by the strong man, the devil.... It was then for the binding of this strong one, that the Apostle saw in the Apocalypse 'an Angel...having the key of the abyss and a chain in His hand. And He laid hold...of the dragon, that old serpent which is called the devil and Satan -- and bound him a thousand years' (Revelation 20:1-2)

"By the 'chain'..., the devil is...**restrained** from seducing those **nations** which **belong to Christ**.... It is **not** said that he [the devil] would not seduce **anybody**, but 'that he would not seduce the **nations**' -- meaning, no doubt, those among which **the Church** exists.... The words 'that he would not seduce the **nations**'...are not to be understood as indicating that afterwards he **is** to seduce!... He is shut up till the thousand years be fulfilled..., so that he may no more deceive **the nations**....

"The devil then is not bound...from the first coming of Christ, to the end of the world when He shall come the second time.... He shall not seduce the Church.... Not even when loosed, shall he seduce it.... The Almighty...will in the end loose him, so that the City of God may see how mighty an adversary it has conquered to the great glory of its Redeemer.... While the devil is bound, the saints reign with Christ during the same thousand years.... The Church even now is the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven."

Augustine explains that the loosening of Satan **after** the thousand years will start "occurring while the **Final Judgment** is **imminent**.... These nations which he [John] names 'Gog' and 'Magog' -- are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the world....

"They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil **was** shut up as in an **abyss** -- and **the devil himself** coming out from them.... The reign of the saints with Christ shall last **longer** than the bonds and imprisonment of the devil.... The thousand years of the reign of the saints **does not terminate** -- though the imprisonment of the devil does!... He (Christ) would by His grace collect, as now He does, **a people so numerous** -- that He thus fills up and repairs the blank made by the fallen angels.... **That beloved and heavenly City...may even rejoice in a still more overflowing population!**" Thus Augustine.

Around 1000 A.D. or ten centuries after the birth of Christ, there were those who quite literally then expected the millennium to start. Or around 1033 A.D., ten centuries after His death and ascension.

But soon after 1000 A.D., the Islamic Turks conquered Jerusalem in 1009 A.D. Many Christians then feared the millennium had just ended, and Satan and his armies of Gog and Magog had been unleashed.. So too, the dreadful famine of A.D. 1033 -- exactly a millennium after Christ's death -- filled the Christian world with thoughts about Satan's final unloosening and his marshalling of the forces of Gog and Magog, the 'living dead.'

Yet even after that, Augustine's views soon continued to dominate the Church. Thus the Augustinian Rev. Professor Dr. Martin Luther wrote (in his *Writings*, Germany, XXII col. 844): "In the beginning, the Church was **victorious** over...the Jews and the might of the Romans. In like manner, she will **today** and **forever** be **victorious**...over the **Pope** and the power of the **Turk**.... The Pope is the last blaze in the lamp which will go out, and ere long be extinguished.... When he is struck with God's Word, then the Pope is turned to a poppy and a frothy flower!"

No Premillenarianism in the A.D. 1530f John Calvin

As Rev. Professor John Calvin states in his *Preface to King Francis of France* (at the front of his *Institutes*): "Our doctrine must stand exalted above all the glory of the world -- unconquerable in its power! For it is not ours, but that of the living God and His Anointed, Whom the Father appointed King so that He may rule from sea to sea and from the rivers even to the ends of the Earth. He must so rule that He smites the whole Earth...with the sword of His mouth..., according to the glorious predictions of the Prophets as regards His Kingdom. Daniel 2:34; Isaiah 11:4; Psalm 2:9."

We should note that Calvin, the greatest of all Reformers, did not place the millennium in Heaven (like many modern Amillennialists do) -- but precisely here on **Earth**. He placed it neither in the past nor in the present (like many Preterists and most Amillennialists do) -- but in the **future**. But he placed it to start occurring only **before** the final visible return of Christ (and thus not as do all Pretribulationists who start it right after Christ's soon 'rapture' of the Church).

In his *Institutes* III:25:5, Calvin rejects the '**heavenly** millennium' theory (held by many modern Amillennialists) -- as well as the views of "the Chiliasts" or the Premillennialists "who **limit** the **reign** of Christ to a thousand years." This chiliastic "**fiction**" (says Calvin), is "too **puerile** to need or to deserve refutation.

"Nor do they receive any countenance from the Apocalypse (in Revelation 20:4), from which it is known that they extract a gloss for their error. Since the thousand years **there** mentioned refer **not to the eternal blessedness of the Church**," but only to those events "which **await** the Church Militant **in this world**" (and thus here on **Earth**).

Here, Calvin's word "**await**" is very important. For it shows he was not looking backward, but forward! Nor was he stuck in the present. But he looked to the future. For he looked to those events "which **await** the Church Militant **in this world**." Yes, 'await' -- in the future!

Calvin continues: "The whole Scripture proclaims that there will be no end...to the happiness of the elect.... Those who assign **only** a thousand years to the children of God to enjoy..., observe not how great an insult they offer to Christ and His Kingdom.

"If they are not to be clothed with immortality -- then Christ Himself into Whose glory they shall be transformed, has not been received into immortal glory. If their blessedness is to have an end -- the Kingdom of Christ on Whose solid structure it rests, is temporary!

"In short, they are either most ignorant of all divine things -- or they maliciously aim at subverting the whole grace of God and power of Christ which cannot have their **full** effect unless sin is obliterated, death swallowed up, and **eternal life fully** renewed.... Let us have done with these **triflers**, so that we may not seem...to think their **dreams** deserving of refutation!"

Calvin remarks also in his *Psychopannychia*: "John has described a twofold resurrection, as well as a twofold death. Namely one [resurrection] of the **soul, before** Judgment -- and another when **the body will be raised up** [at the Judgment], when the soul also will be raised up to glory. 'Blessed,' says he, 'are those who have part in the first resurrection; on them the second death takes **no effect**' (Revelation 20:6).... That **first resurrection...is the only entrance to beatific glory!**"

Calvin wrote too in his Preamble and *Commentary* on Psalm 47:7f: "Salvation to the **whole world**, was to **proceed**.... The glory...will diffuse its splendour **far and wide**.... God Himself will cause the beams of His grace to shine into **distant lands** -- so that **kings and nations** may be united into fellowship with the children of Abraham.... It would be extended **to the uttermost boundaries of the Earth**..., so as to occupy **the whole world**."

Calvin continues in his *Commentary* on Psalm 72:11: "The whole world **will be brought into subjection to the authority of Christ**.... The **nations will be convinced** that nothing is more desirable than to receive from Him Laws and Ordinances.... David therefore with good reason prays that the glory of the divine name may **fill the whole Earth** -- since **that Kingdom was to be extended even to the uttermost boundaries of the Globe**."

On Isaiah 26:19, Calvin comments: "'Your dead men shall live!'... God guards believers.... They shall live' amidst death itself.... The Prophet includes the whole reign of Christ, from the beginning to the end. Since the hope of living...goes beyond this world....

"The reprobate, even while they live, are dead.... But believers, by fleeing to God, obtain life in the midst of afflictions.... Because they have in prospect that day of the resurrection....

"Isaiah includes the whole reign of Christ. We begin to receive the fruit of this consolation, when we are admitted into the Church. Yet we shall not enjoy it fully, till that last day of the resurrection has come when all things shall be most completely restored.... On this account, it is also called 'the day of restitution' (Acts 3:21)....

"All who are ingrafted into Christ, are justly said to live.... Out of the depths of death, they always come forth **conquerors**.... He (Isaiah) willingly ranks himself in the number of those which he firmly believes will be restored to life....

"Wicked men...'shall not live'.... (Final) resurrection will be common not only to believers, but also to the reprobate.... Isaiah does not speak merely of the resurrection, but of the happiness which believers will enjoy. Wicked men will indeed rise again..., to eternal destruction....

"Awake and sing, you inhabitants of the dust!' He gives the name 'inhabitants of the dust' to believers.... They enjoy God's blessings in this life.... The 'habitation in the dust' will not deprive (them) of that heavenly vigour by which they shall rise again. But the reprobate..., separated from God the Source of life and from Christ, fade away even while they live -- until they are wholly swallowed up by death."

Calvin assures the elect: "Your dew is the dew of herbs'.... 'Herbs,' and especially those of the meadows, are dried up in winter -- so that they appear to be wholly dead.... Yet the roots are concealed beneath.... Which, when they have imbibed the 'dew' at the return of spring, (they) put forth their vigour.... 'Herbs' which formerly were dry and withered, grow green again...(and) regain...former vigour.... We also revive, when watered by the grace of God!"

In Acts 24:15 too, we read: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Simultaneously!

Calvin comments: "After professing that he believes in Scripture, he (Paul) now adds the hope of the future resurrection.... The general resurrection is asserted here against certain (premillennial) fanatics, who restrict it to the members of Christ. But as Paul says in this verse..., all will rise again. So Christ clearly refers to all without distinction -- in His words 'some to judgment, some to life' (John 5:29)."

For as John 5:29 fully declares: "They that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life. And they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." And this is the true interpretation also of that same John's later words in Revelation 20:4-5. His words that those "which had not worshipped the beast...lived and reigned with Christ a 1000 years -- but the rest of the dead live not, until the 1000 years were finished!"

In First Thessalonians 4:15-17, Paul says the live believers shall not be raptured physically long before dead believers -- but that those live believers shall be "caught up **together**" with dead believers "to meet the Lord in the air" at His final coming. Calvin comments this would not be soon, but at a "**later** date.... These words...disprove the aberrations...of the Chiliasts....

"When believers have once been gathered together..., their life will have no end.... To allot Christ a thousand years so that afterwards He would cease to reign, is too **horrible** to speak of. Those...who limit the life of believers to a thousand years, commit this **absurdity!**"

No Premillennialism from the 1544f John Knox till 1830 A.D.

Calvin's Student **John Knox** taught the same in Scotland from 1544 onward. He wrote: "Perceiving how Satan in his members, the Antichrist of our time, cruelly rages seeking to downthring and to destroy the Evangel of Christ and His Congregation -- **we ought** according to our bounden duty to strive in our Master's cause even unto death, being **certain** of the **victory** in **Him**.... Arise, O Lord, and let Your enemies be confounded! Let them who hate Your godly name flee from Your presence! Give Your servants strength to speak Your Word with boldness! And let **all nations** cleave to the true knowledge of You!"¹⁸

John Knox and Mrs. John Calvin's brother-in-law Rev. Dr. **William Whittingham** wrote the Geneva Bible in 1560. There they declare (on Daniel 2:45 and on Romans 11:25f): "Christ [is the Stone] Who was sent by God..., Whose Kingdom at the beginning would be small" but which "would **at length...fill the whole Earth....** The **Jews...and the Gentiles -- shall embrace Christ....** The **world shall be restored** to a new life.... The time shall come that **the whole nation of the Jews**, though not every one particularly, **shall be joined to the Church of Christ!"**

The **Geneva Bible** comments that in Revelation 20:1, the 'Angel' indeed "may signify Christ Who would tread down the serpent's head." The 'key of the bottomless pit' means "the Gospel -- whereby Hell is shut up to the faithful, and Satan is chained so that he cannot hurt them." By 'the **rest of the dead**' -- John "means them which are spiritually dead." They shall finally suffer 'the second death' or "the death of the **soul** which is eternal damnation."

The 1561 A.D. **Belgic Confession** (25 & 36) of Guido de Brés declares: "**We still use the testimonies taken out of the Law** and the Prophets, to confirm us in the doctrine of the Gospel and to regulate our life in all honesty to the glory of God according to His will.... We believe that our gracious God...wills **that the world should be governed by certain Laws....** For this purpose, **He has committed the sword to the Magistrate....** Their office is...that they protect the sacred Ministry, and thus...**remove and prevent all idolatry** and false-worship -- so that the kingdom of **Antichrist may be destroyed**, and the **Kingdom of Christ promoted!"**

The 1563 A.D. **Heidelberg Catechism** (123 & 127) of Olevianus and Ursinus proclaims: "**Thy Kingdom come!**" That is, so govern us by Thy Word and Spirit -- so that we may **submit** ourselves **more and more** to Thee!... **Increase Thy Church!** **Destroy the works of the devil** and all power that would exalt itself against Thee and also all wicked counsels devised against Thy Holy Word -- till the full perfection of Thy Kingdom shall have come!... **Strengthen** us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, so that we may...not sink in this spiritual warfare -- but constantly and **strenuously resist** our foes, till at last **we obtain a complete victory!"**

This same postmillennial perspective was promoted also by Calvin's successors. See: Theodore Beza, William Perkins, Richard Hakluyt, John Foxe, James the First, Thomas Brightman, J.H. Alsted, Richard Sibbes, Gijsbert Voetius, Samuel Rutherford, John Cotton, William Twisse, and the Westminster Assembly of 1643f.

The 1584-1652 A.D. American Rev. **John Cotton** made some striking observations about the millennium one year before the Westminster Assembly, which he was invited to attend as a Commissioner. The pouring out of the seventh vial of Revelation chapter sixteen, held Cotton, inaugurates the thousand years' reign of Christ here on Earth -- as soon as the power of the preached Word of God finally defeats Antichrist. That would then activate a widescale international **social regeneration** called the 'first resurrection' -- which would be spiritual, not bodily. It would commence at the fall of the Antichrist."

Cotton explained in his work *The Church's Resurrection*: "**These thousand years...most properly begin** at the throwing down of **Antichrist** and destruction of **Rome**. The Lord will then send such powerful Ministers into the Church that, by the power of the **keys**, they shall take hold of Satan -- that is to say, convict him and his instruments of all Popish and Paganish Religion and bind him by...the strong **chain** of God's ordinances."

Thus the Westminster Larger Catechism (QQ. 45 & 191 & 195) of British Calvinists states that "Christ executeth the office of a King in calling...a people...and giving them...**Laws**...by which He visibly governs them...[in] **overcoming all their enemies.**" In the Lord's Prayer the phrase "Thy Kingdom come!" is a petition "that the kingdom of sin and **Satan may be destroyed**, the **Gospel propagated throughout the world**, the **Jews called**, the **fullness of the Gentiles brought in**" -- and the **Church** be "furnished with all Gospel-Officers and ordinances, **purged from corruption**, [and be] countenanced and **maintained by the Civil Magistrate**"; and "**Satan trodden under our feet...for ever** (Romans 16:20)."

The Westminster Confession of Faith (23:1) states that God "hath ordained the **Civil Magistrates** to be under Him...for His Own glory and the publick good..., [and] hath armed them with the power of the sword for the defence and **encouragement of those that are good** and for the **punishment of evil-doers.**" It was expanded even further in the Savoy Declaration.

The 1658 Savoy Declaration 26:4f says: "There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ.... The Pope of Rome...is that **Antichrist...whom the Lord shall destroy**.... In the **latter days** -- Antichrist being **destroyed**, the **Jews called** and the **adversaries** of the Kingdom of His dear Son **broken** -- the **churches** of Christ, being **enlarged** and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in **this world a more quiet...and glorious condition.**" Savoy thus expects an earthly 'Golden Age' at some future time before Christ's visible return at the **simultaneous** resurrection of **all** flesh

Also after the Westminster Assembly and the Savoy Declaration, the postmillennial perspective has been championed by a great cloud of witnesses almost too great even to number. Here we mention only John Owen, Durham, Eliot, Van Riebeeck, Dickson, Charnock, Greenhill, Samuel Lee, Brooks, John Brown of Wamphray, Essenius, Spener, Bunyan, Cocceius, Newton, Howe, Cameron, Durham, Witsius, the Mathers, Koelman, Baxter, Vitringa, Matthew Henry, Brakel, Boston, Lampe, Fleming, Willison, Lowman, Edwards, Whitefield, Bengel, the Wesleys, Doddridge, Gill, John Brown of Haddington, Flavel, Dwight, Fuller, Carey, Hopkins, Clarke, Haldane, Neander, Faber, Livingstone, Alexander, David Brown, Hengstenberg, Paton, Barnes, Thornwell, Fairbairn, Spurgeon, the Hodges, Martensen, Dabney, Andrew Murray, Trench, Dorner, John Kennedy, Shedd, Symington, Candlish, Meyer, Girardeau, Schaff, Strong, Warfield, MacFarlane, Snowden, Machen, Schilder, Zwemer, Carroll, Craig, Boettner, Gerstner, John Murray, Kik, R.B. Kuiper, Latourette, Van Til, and Rushdoony.¹⁹

The 1620-58 Scottish Presbyterian James Durham commented on Revelation 20:1-4: "We conceive this place to hold out a **flourishing and good condition for some time** of the **Church Militant**..., going [al]together opposite to things wherein the [present] **low condition** of the saints consisteth.... It consisteth in the plurality and **abundance** of professors...**imbracing** this Gospel, many nations...**joining them[selves] to the Lord.**"

We here quote a citation from the 1636-1708 Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Witsius. In his *Holy Dissertations on the Apostles' Creed*, he explains Revelation 20:1-6 thus: "The erection of the 'thrones' here refers to the Church (here) on Earth.... Believers, at least without molestation or stumblingblocks from civil governments and even with their encouragement and support -- shall hold their meetings. For the preaching and hearing of the Word of God; for ruling the Church by the keys of the heavenly Kingdom; and for...**victory** over pernicious heresies.

"The persons who sit [and rule] on those thrones, are therefore not men who have died long ago. But **living saints** in that period which is here described. Thanks to the fellowship of the Church Militant (on Earth) with the Church Triumphant (in Heaven), every addition to the Kingdom of Christ...on Earth...is an addition to the Kingdom of the saints in Heaven too [cf. Hebrews 12:22-23].

"Till now, we have had no mention of the resurrection of **bodies**.... 'They' -- note, not their souls but the persons themselves! -- 'they...had not worshipped the beast' *etc.* That is to say, 'they' who faithfully adhere to Christ, resolve to have no fellowship with the kingdom of Antichrist. 'And they lived' and enjoy a blessed peace in their consciences and a **rich surfeit** of spiritual consolation.... They reign with Christ. They **triumph** over Satan and the world, and they share in the Saviour's glorious grace.

"Thus 'they live and reign with Christ a thousand years.' Not that the lives of each stretch out to a thousand years! For that never has happened; and that too shall never be given to any mortal. But those kind of people then reign thus, **during many successive centuries**, till the fixed time.

"If you repeatedly point out that they **then** 'live again' -- we would simply reply that they **then** 'lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.' Yet they do in a sense then live '**again**' -- "inasmuch as that kind of people was recently distressed under the tyranny of the beast...and reduced to a smaller number. They were engaged in such difficulties and deprivations, that they then hardly disclosed...any principle of vitality at all. But **now**, the whole cycle of things has **altered**. Their numbers are **increased**....

"The rest of the dead, lived not again (until the thousand years were finished).' This 'rest (of the dead)' is those who did not receive Jesus' testimony -- and (who) worshipped the beast. That is to say, those who continued their disbelief -- or who, instead of believing the healthy doctrine, embraced the 'Church of the Antichrist'.... They 'lived not again (until the thousand years were finished).' They do not partake of spiritual life, and they also get no part of the happiness of that blessed condition to which the True Church of Christ is promoted at this time....

"The resurrection of the world (now)...., consists of the glorious enlargement of the Church by the successful preaching of the Gospel and the renewing energy of the Holy Spirit.... That includes the first preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom among Jews and Non-Jews. This is accompanied by the conversion of many. It also includes the open disavowal of Heathenism in the Roman Empire under Constantine -- and the Reformation of the Church by the unmasking of that Antichristian system. The prediction of the thousand years refers also to all favourable alterations which are still expected....

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection!" This expression stands against the false glorification of the followers of the beast -- who, as a result of the superstitious and idolatrous canonizations of the Pope, honour their supporters. The expression 'live' -- does not here mean...mere existence.... To live is not just to exist, but to be happy!" Thus Witsius.

The 1703-58 A.D. American Rev. Professor Dr. **Jonathan Edwards** stated in his *History of Redemption* there will be a "great **spiritual** resurrection...of the Church.... This **spiritual**

resurrection, is the resurrection spoken of as attended with judgment. Revelation 20:4.... I will describe the **prosperous** state the Church shall be in.... It is...the time of the Kingdom of Heaven **upon Earth**.... Now is the principal fulfilment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak of the glorious times of the Gospel...**in the latter days**....

"Then, **all countries and nations** -- even those which are now most ignorant, shall be full of light and **knowledge**.... Then, many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines.... Excellent books will be published in Africa.... The Scriptures everywhere represent it to be of **long continuance**.... Revelation 20:4."

Edwards also comments on the activity of the finally-resurrected ancient nations of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20:8. He remarks: "There is **nothing** in the prophecy which seems to hold forth as though the Church actually falls into their hands -- as the Church **had** fallen [previously and quite before the earlier commencement of the **millennium**] into the hands of Antichrist.... God will **never** suffer this...**after** the fall of Antichrist! For **then** -- the day of her mourning shall be **ended!**"

The 1697-1771 A.D. Rev. Dr. John Gill held "that all the wicked shall be brought out of Hell, for the purpose of going up on the length of the Earth to fight [the] battle referred to in Revelation (20:5-8)." And even Arminian Seventh-day Adventists have stated that at Revelation 20:8, "Gog and Magog are **revived** by means of, or **resulting** from, the second **resurrection**."

Modern Premillennialism and Postmillennialism from 1830 till 1957 A.D.

So there is **no trace at all** of **Dispensationalistic Pretribulationism** from the Early Church Fathers right down till after Gill in 1771. Neither is there any trace of it in later Church History till after the damnable French Revolution of 1789 to 1815 A.D., prior to the sudden occurrence of the distraught 'tongues-speaking' Irvingites around Margaret Macdonald.

In A.D. 1830, she had the world's first 'pretribulationistic' revelation. She wrote:"There was great darkness and error.... Suddenly, what it was -- burst upon me with a glorious light.

"I saw it was just the Lord Himself descending from Heaven.... Men think that it will be something seen by the natural eye. But 'tis spiritual discernment that is needed!...

"Only those who have the light of God within them, will see the sign of His appearance.... I saw that the glory of the ministration of the Spirit had not been known.... Then shall we be caught up to meet Him!... How shall the awful sight of a false-christ be seen on this Earth!... I saw that night..., that there will be an outpouring of the Spirit...such as has not been -- a baptism of fire.... Jesus wants His bride.... He that shall come, will come.... Come, Lord Jesus!"²⁰

Only **after** 1830, was this novel pretribulationistic eschatology speedily disseminated. This was done in Britain by Irvingism (where William Irving encouraged speaking in tongues during worship services), and especially by the 1800-82 A.D. Plymouth Brethrenist J.N. Darby, It was done especially in the United States by Mormonism and Seventh-day Adventism. And later, also by the unitarian Jehovah witnesses.

Even **D.L. Moody** and **C.I. Scofield** -- and later **L.S. Chafer** -- spread this error. So too did dispensationalistic Seminaries such as Dallas (in Texas) and Grace (in Indiana). But it was disseminated **only minimally** outside of those **circles** -- and very minimally indeed **outside of Britain and the United States** right down to our present time.

Yet even in the United States, there was a swift reaction. The 1798-1870 A.D. Rev. Dr. **Albert Barnes**, in his *Analysis* of chapter twenty in his *Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, explains: "This chapter...pertains to the **future**, and discloses things which are **yet to occur**.... Satan is to be arrested and bound for a thousand years.... This is properly the **millennium** -- the **long period** when the principles of **True Religion** will have the **ascendency** on the **Earth**....

"Time is marked...until the fall of [the Papacy as] the great enemy of the Church. **Beyond** that, it does not seem to have been regarded as necessary to determine the actual duration of the events referred to.... The grand purpose was to show **that Christianity would finally triumph**.... The **end** is triumphant and glorious."

In his *Commentary* itself, Barnes insists: "The scene that is recorded here [in Revelation 20:1f], occurs **after** the destruction of the beast and the false-prophet (chapter 19:18-21)..., **after** the final destruction of the Papal and Mahometan powers.... The world shall enjoy a reign of peace and righteousness during the long period....

"**The Earth** would **continue** under a reign of righteousness, **through a vastly long period in the future**.... This will be **subsequent** to the downfall of the Papacy, and the termination of the Mahometan power in the world.... There will be a **general prevalence of evangelical religion**.... It will be a time when the Hebrew people -- the Jews -- will be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and will embrace the Messiah Whom their fathers crucified."

Barnes also comments on the way in which the millennium will **end**. "All the enemies that have ever opposed the Church -- in all forms of Paganism, Mahometanism, Popery and delusion -- will be destroyed for ever. The world then will have peace; the Church will have rest; the great triumph will have been achieved."

The 1797-1878 A.D. Rev. Professor Dr. **Charles Hodge** in his *Systematic Theology* (II:637f), insisted about Christ: "Having been committed to Him for a special purpose, this universal dominion as Mediator will be relinquished when that purpose is accomplished. He will reign **until all** His enemies are put under His feet. And when that last enemy [death] is subdued, He will deliver up this Kingdom to the Father and [then] reign forever as King over the redeemed."

Charles Hodge's son, the 1823-86 A.D. Professor Dr. **A.A. Hodge** in his *Outlines of Theology* (pp. 568f), asks the question: "What is the Scriptural doctrine concerning the millennium?" This he answers as follows:

"First. The Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament clearly reveal that 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 is to be gradually attained through the Spiritual presence of Christ in the ordinary dispensation of

Providence and ministrations of His Church. Matthew 13:31-32 & 28:19-20 and Psalms 2:7-8 & 22:27-29 & 72:8-11 and Isaiah 2:2-3 & 11:6-9 & 60:12 & 66:23 and Daniel 2:35-44 and Zechariah 9:10 & 14:9 and Revelation 11:15.

"Second, the period of this general prevalency of the Gospel will continue a thousand years -- and is hence designated 'the millennium' (Revelation 20:2-7). Third, the Jews are to be converted to Christianity either at the commencement or during the continuance of this period (Zechariah 12:10 & 13:1 and Romans.11:26-29 and Second Corinthians 3:15-16).

"Fourth, at the end of these thousand years..., Christ's advent (and) the general resurrection and judgment will be simultaneous -- and immediately succeeded by the burning of the old and the revelation of the new Earth and Heavens." Second Peter 3:4-13 and Revelation 20:15 & 21:1.

It was further asked: "What considerations favour the spiritual and oppose the literal(istic) interpretation of Revelation 20:1-10?" Is the millennium and its end positive, or negative?

Here Hodge answers: "Christ has in reserve for His Church a period of universal expansion and of pre-eminent spiritual prosperity, when the spirit and characters of the 'noble army of martyrs' shall be reproduced again in the great body of God's people in an unprecedented measure -- and when these martyrs shall, in the general triumph of their cause and in the overthrow of that of their enemies, receive judgment over their foes and reign on the Earth. While the party of Satan -- 'the rest of the dead' -- shall not flourish again....

"The future general conversion of the Jews is taught in Scripture. This Paul, in Romans 11:15-29, both asserts and proves from Old Testament prophecies. *E.g* Isaiah 59:20 and Jeremiah 31:31 and Zechariah 12:10 and Second Corinthians 3:15-16.... The spiritual interpretation of these Old Testament prophecies...regards them as predicting the future purity and extension of the Christian Church."

On the point of the millennium being yet-future, also the 1837-1920 A.D. Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. agrees. In his volumes on *The End* (IV pp. 326 & 348), he declares: "The representation [of the Book of Revelation] from chapter 20...until chapter 21..., must be taken as **one** uninterrupted whole.... The millennium is not already **behind us**, but **still** to be **expected** (20:4-6)."

The 1851-1921 A.D. Rev. Professor Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield too wrote about Revelation twenty in his *The Millennium and the Apocalypse*. He said: "The picture that is brought before us here, is...the thousand years.... In the **preceding** vision (19:11-21), Christ's Gospel is **to conquer the Earth**.... The saints described, are removed from the sphere of Satan's assaults."

In 1929 Rev. Professor Dr. Ned Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary published his book *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church*. There, he quoted approvingly the words from Hippolytus we ourselves have cited earlier above. Then Stonehouse himself stated that at the end of the millennium "this loosening of Satan signifies not that he enters upon a period of renewed activity, but that he with his followers are to be cast into the burning and judged!"

The Rev. Dr. **J. Marcellus Kik**, a former Associate Editor of *Christianity Today*, in his 1955 book *Revelation Twenty* well paraphrases his own understanding of Revelation 20:4-7 as follows: "I beheld the [**living**] **saints** seated upon thrones -- **ruling over** the flesh and **the world**.... Yes, I beheld too the [**postmortal**] **victorious lives** of those who had **been beheaded** -- and also of those who [**had**] **suffered** because they [had] refused to worship the beast. As a matter of fact, **all** saints lived and reigned with Christ -- for a thousand years....

"Satan's loosening will be that period just before the Second Coming of the Lord.... Before the loosening of Satan, all nations will become predominantly Christian.... Notice that Satan does not break out of the prison by his own power.... He is loosened by the Lord" -- to be led off to the Final Judgment.

In the 1957 edition of his book *The Millennium*, Professor Dr. **Loraine Boettner** stated: "Warfield believed there will be no resurgence of evil at all at the end, but rather that at the return of Christ, the present Kingdom -- then perfected with the **conquering** of the last enemy death -- will be merged into the eternal Kingdom.... We agree that Revelation 20:1-10 affords no real basis for believing that there is to be a final apostasy in the sense that a large proportion of Earth's inhabitants turn against God, or that the safety of the saints is seriously threatened."

Anti-Premillennialism from 1966 to 2003f A.D.

The amillennialistic Rev. Professor **Herman Hoeksema** wrote quite pessimistically about the theory of Amillennarianism in his 1966 A.D. *Reformed Dogmatics* (pp. 816-19): "The Amillennarians...believe that Scripture does not teach a millennium in any form.... According to them, the measure of iniquity shall be filled in this dispensation. The end of this present time shall be characterized by great apostasy from the Church. Antichrist, the man of sin, shall develop and shall realize his kingdom for a little season . During that period, there shall be great tribulation such as has never been witnessed on Earth before." In all respects, Hoeksema's Amillennialism is just about as pessimistic as that of many Premillennialists!

Concerning Premillennialism, Rev. Hoeksema writes with a very much greater insight: "The Premillennial view...stands...directly opposed to that of Postmillennialism. The [second] coming of Christ is [for the Premillennialist] **before** the millennium. But this ['second'] coming of Christ is again distinguished as the '*parousia*' or the [invisible and sudden and secret] rapture -- from what is called the 'revelation' [or the later visible 'third' coming of Christ seven years later].

"The rapture according to them may occur any time, and is not preceded by any signs. [It] consists of the change of the then-living saints that expect His coming..., the resurrection to glory of the saints that have died before that rapture, and the reception of them into the air [together with those living saints who are also then raptured alive simultaneously].... They will be with Christ. This state of the Church lasts approximately seven years. In the meantime, the Antichrist will rage in the world -- and the Great Tribulation will occur.

"At the end of the seven years, Christ will come again (the third time) in the 'revelation' -- together with His Church, to establish the millennium. The devil will be bound a thousand years. Christ will reign in Jerusalem over His (Jewish) Kingdom-People and over His Church together.

"At the end of the millennium, the devil will be loosed and the nations of Gog and Magog will come against the Holy City. But Christ will consume them. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked, will take place. Judgment will be held over all nations. And the eternal state will ensue -- with, according to some, the Church eternally in Heaven; while the Kingdom-People, the Jews, will be forever on the New Earth....

"Serious objections may be raised against this premillennial conception.... It is based upon a separation of Israel and the Church. Israel [it is alleged] is really the Kingdom-People, while the Church is the body of Christ. The Jews rejected their Messiah. The Kingdom-People were dispersed and led into captivity -- while in the interval, Christ gathers a new people, the Church. When however the Church is finished [being gathered], Christ will again deal with His Old Testament Kingdom-People; restore them; gather them into their own land; restore the temple and the ritual of the temple (sacrifices included); and reign on the throne of David.

"This separation of Israel and the Church is not according to Scripture. Israel is the Church, and the Church is 'Israel' gathered from Jews and Gentiles. Mount Zion, Jerusalem, temple and altar, sacrifices and shadows -- are all fulfilled in Christ and realized in the Church.... Secondly..., this premillennial view is essentially Jewish and is based upon a Jewish interpretation of prophecy that totally disregards the interpretation of the New Testament....

"The literal interpretation of the prophecies of the Old Testament involves them in the greatest absurdity. For it requires not only the restoration of the nation of Israel, but also the future existence of the nations that surrounded Israel -- Assyria, Babylonia, Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, *etc.*

"Thirdly, in this view of the first and second resurrection -- and perhaps of three (or four?) resurrections! -- Premillennialism is in flagrant contradiction with Holy Writ. For Scripture teaches very plainly that the resurrection of the dead, both of the righteous and of the wicked, will take place at the same time and in the same hour. John 5:28-29: 'Marvel not at this! For the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth. They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.'

"Fourthly, the Bible plainly teaches that after the resurrection -- the saints shall enter into everlasting glory. There certainly is no mention of a rapture by which the saints shall temporarily be received up with Christ into the air -- nor of a (later) millennium in which the saints shall dwell temporarily on the Earth with their resurrection-bodies, in the midst of an imperfect world in the midst of sin and death. For surely, in the millennium, births and deaths are to continue -- and the human race is to develop in the millennium, as well as in the past.

"Fifthly, and in close connection with the preceding objection, it must be said that the premillennial theory involves itself in all kinds of absurdities. How can the glorified saints in their resurrection bodies which are spiritual and heavenly, still exist and manifest themselves and operate in the old world? How can the throne of Christ be established in the old city Jerusalem? And how can sinners and saints -- the former in their old and sinful body, the latter in their glorified state -- stand in the presence of Christ the glorified Lord?" Thus Rev. Professor Herman Hoeksema.

After Hoeksema, comes Hoekema! Rev. Professor Dr. Anthony A. Hoekema of Calvin Theological Seminary, in his *The Bible and the Future* (pp. 173f), writes: "The concept of Amillennialism is not very fortunate. It suggests either that Amillennialists do not believe in any millennium -- or that they simply ignore the first six verses of Revelation twenty, which speak of a millennial rule.." And in his *The Meaning of the Millennium*, Hoekema rightly observes: "Because of the binding of Satan during this present age, the **nations cannot conquer the Church** -- but **the Church is conquering the nations!**"

Many modern Pretribulationists and other Dispensationalists (such as John Walvoord and Hal Lindsey) quite wrongly claim that **most** (if not **all**) of the first Early Church Fathers were Premillennial **Rapturists**. They believe Jesus could return "**any moment**" to **resurrect dead Christians**, and then secretly "rapture" His dwindling though still-living Church "up in the air" **before** "the great tribulation" of ungodly earthlings. Thereafter, the Church would then return and rule with Christ on Earth for a thousand years -- until God would **resurrect the wicked dead**.

That notion is false. Neither the Church of the Older Testament (even when under foreign domination) nor the always-struggling and often-persecuted Church of the Newer Testament (even till the fourth century) ever expected to dwindle or to be whisked away; but only **to conquer this great planet Earth**. That Church expected God not to the **rapture** her before an assumed "Great Tribulation" -- but rather to **heal** the world His Son had come to **save**.

Also the famous Premillennial Scholar Professor Dr. George Eldon Ladd insists against Pretribulationism that "**every** Church Father who deals with this subject, expects the **Church** to **suffer** at the hands of **Antichrist**.... We can find **no trace of Pretribulationism in the Early Church**. And no modern Pretribulationist has successfully proved that this particular doctrine was held by **any** of the Church Fathers or students of the Word, before the **nineteenth** century."

The Bible does, of course, teach the future physical catching up in the air of the saints **at the Second Coming of Christ in Final Judgment**. Matthew 24:31-40 *cf.* First Thessalonians 4:13-17. Yet the Bible does **not** teach the **chiliastic** idea of a "two resurrections" separated from one another by a thousand years. For the idea that a future physical "rapture" of dead saints and also of living saints would be followed by their return seven years later, and all before their thousand-years-long visible reign with Christ Himself here on Earth prior to the physical resurrection of the wicked dead and a final apostasy -- is unknown to Holy Scripture.

The chiliastic "double resurrection" teaching -- the doctrine of two millennially-separated physical resurrections of dead saints and later of the wicked dead -- is foreign to Holy Scripture. **Pessimistic** chiliasm is the very opposite of the **optimistic** doctrine of a future "**Golden Age**" of spiritual and physical prosperity on Earth, some time between the present and the final resurrection of all mankind at the Final Judgment.

Rev. Rousas J. Rushdoony stated in his 1970 A.D. *Thy Kingdom Come!* that in Revelation twenty "verses 7-10, we see the **release of Satan** [so] that he might be **destroyed**.... Some see a **defeat** of the **saints** and a **victory** for Satan **in the end times** -- but only by importing other Bible passages into this text, all with **doubtful** reference." Rushdoony himself then insists: "We are here told only of an **attempt**.... It **fails**, and God destroys forever the power of Satan."

In his later *Systematic Theology*, Rushdoony explains: "**The Second Coming...shall be preceded...by the destruction of all His enemies** -- except death (First Corinthians 15:24-26). But there can be a **very long** time-span between the **world-triumph** -- and **His coming again.**"

The amillennial viewpoint of Rev. Professor Drs. **J. van Genderen and W.H. Velema** of the Christian Reformed Churches, is rather peculiar. In their 1993 *Short Reformed Dogmatics* (pp. 759f), they reject the Reformational viewpoint that precisely the Papacy down through the centuries is the Antichrist -- and replace it with a future and finally-eschatological Antichrist.

After a pathetically-minimal treatment of Postmillennialism, they go on to give a much better treatment of Premillennialism (in which however they wrongly include the two celebrated Postmillennial Dutch Reformed Theologians the seventeenth-century Willem á Brakel and Herman Witsius). Specifically on Dispensationalism, they then very accurately say:

"Dispensationalism is a radical form of chiliasm. It builds on a foundation laid down by (the author of the Plymouth Brethren) J.N. Darby.... The name 'Dispensationalism' or dispensational doctrine, is a clear typification thereof. Because it teaches that there are seven dispensations in which man is tested in relation to his obedience to the will of God.

"That is the way it is suggested in the interpretative notes which are to be found in *The (New) Scofield Reference Bible*, which is very authoritative with Dispensationalists. We now take a look at the chief claims of this doctrine.

"The literal interpretation of the prophecies of the Old Testament, form its foundation. In addition, the depiction of the future is strongly determined by the scheme of successive dispensations.

"Of fundamental significance is a sharp division between Israel and the Church. The coming of the Kingdom is postponed by the disbelief of the Jews, for whom it was first intended. Then salvation was offered to the Church. But with that, God made a diversion. The dispensation of the Church is actually an intermezzo, and shall soon be over.

"The resurrection of the believers and the rapture of the Church takes place at the first coming again of Christ. That is derived especially from First I Thessalonians 4:13-17 and First Corinthians 15:51-52.

"While the raptured Church is then celebrating the bridal feast with Christ, a remnant of Israel believes in Jesus as the previously-promised Messiah. That [is supposed to be] the 144000 who are sealed (Revelation 7:1-8). By their testimony, many come to be converted from the nations. But then the enemies of God and His people gather themselves for a fierce attack -- the battle of Armageddon.

"Christ then comes yet again to establish His Kingdom on Earth, and to destroy all His enemies. He erects His throne in Jerusalem, and shall there literally and visibly reign for a thousand years. That Kingdom is primarily a Jewish Kingdom, although also the other nations shall share in its blessings....

"In Jerusalem the temple is rebuilt -- which shall be the central point of worship in the realm of peace. Sacrifices are brought there, to commemorate Christ dying for us....

"(Even) under the rule of Christ, there are still people who do not bow to Him. With Satan as their leader, they shall turn against the camp of the saints. But Christ then makes an end of all resistance. Then He gives the Kingdom over to His Father....

"A well-known author like Hal Lindsey goes further than many others, with his calculations and predictions. He indeed acknowledges that nobody can know the day and the hour of the (second) coming of Christ [at the so-called 'rapture']. But he accepts that his own [present] generation shall experience this occurrence! According to him -- Scripture frequently points to the United States, the European Union, Russia and China....

"With the chiliastic interpretation, the verbal form *ezeesan* (Revelation 20:4) must be translated with 'they came back to life' -- which would refer to a bodily resurrection. But in connection with the determination of the time of that text, another translation is possible -- 'they lived and ruled as kings for a thousand years'....

"There is a great difference of opinion regarding the Church. According to this [Premillennial-Dispensationalistic] doctrine of dispensations, before the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) there was no Church -- but only believers. This separation between Israel and the Church conflicts with the unity of the people of God, which according to the New Testament is so important (see John 10:16 and Galatians and Ephesians 2:18)." Thus Professors van Genderen and Velema.

But after Velema, comes Venema! In his recent book *The Promise of the Future*, Rev. Professor Dr. **Cornelis Venema** concurs with the interpretation of Romans 11 held by Postmillennialists Professors Charles Hodge and John Murray. He agrees it refers to a future conversion of a large number of Jews to Christ.

In an exposition of Revelation 20, he points out that there is a parallel between individual and cosmic redemption. The individual receives a new resurrection body that is free from sin and the effects of the curse. But the resurrection body is not immaterial!

There is continuity between it and the present body. Likewise, there is continuity between the present Heavens and Earth -- and the new Heavens and Earth. These new Heavens and Earth are not some kind of immaterial Gnostic realm.

Venema is optimistic. He expects widespread conversion to Christ across the world, and also that of the Jews. To him, the Kingdom of Christ shall gradually overcome that of Satan.

Some years ago, Professor Dr. Boettner wrote to Rev. Professor Dr. **Francis Nigel Lee**: "I remember with real appreciation your visit here at my home about nine years ago.... I am writing primarily to say that in the recent [revised 1984] edition of *The Millennium*, I have added a chapter -- 'The Millennium of Revelation 20.' This presents a new interpretation of chapter 19:11-21 which carries over into the 20th chapter -- and, I believe, gives a truly logical basis for the postmillennial position.

"I have never been fully satisfied with the view that just before the end of the Church Age, there is to be a fearful apostasy in which the saints would be all but annihilated just before Christ returns.... I believe that this [my **new**] interpretation solves that problem; that it firmly establishes the postmillennial system. I am sending you a copy of this book.... I shall be glad to have your reaction to this...interpretation. I highly respect your position as a Reformed Theologian and a Postmillennialist, and I shall await with interest your evaluation."

Dr. Lee thereupon responded to Dr. Boettner: "Thank you for your gracious airmail letter.... I too remember...my visit to your home, some nine years ago -- and our agreement then, concerning 'no final apostasy' at Revelation 20:8...."

"I find myself in total agreement with your recent edition of your book *The Millennium*.... For I myself would regard...Revelation 20:5-12*f* as being descriptive of...Christ's postmillennial no-final-apostasy Second Coming." And that is the position Dr. Lee took also in his later 2003*f* A.D. 1733-page work *Onward Christian Soldiers!*

Summary of Premillennialism down through the ages till today

We summarize. Just **none** of the books of the Bible are Premillennial! **Nor** are any extant writings of the Earliest Church Fathers -- such as the *Didachee* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (A.D. 97), the *Epistle of Barnabas* (98), Clement of Rome (98), Hermas (100), Ignatius (107), Quadratus (120), the *Epistle to Diognetus* (130), Pseudo-Clement (135), Polycarp (140), or Papias (145). With the exception of the Mid-Patristic Justin (150), Irenaeus (185), Tertullian (200) and a few following them till Lactantius (310) -- none of whom were Pretribulationistic Rapturists. Nor were any of the later Patristic Fathers.

In fact, **all** mainline Ante-Nicene Fathers even after Justin -- **in spite of living during times when the Church was often persecuted by the Pagan Roman Empire** -- strongly opposed Chiliasm and all other forms of Escapism. Thus Tatian (A.D. 155), Theophilus (170), Melito (173), Claudius Apollinarius (175), Hegesippus (178), Athenagoras (185), Clement of Alexandria (190), Caius (210), Hippolytus (220), Origen (230), Dionysius of Alexandria (255), Cyprian (258), Methodius (290), Victorinus (300), and the writers of the 310 *Apostolic Constitutions*.

Even **throughout that murky period of persecution**, the vast majority of Christian Leaders maintained their eschatological **optimism**. The only reason why **even then** (and only from the middle of the second century onward) just a **minority** of Christians adopted any form of Chiliasm at all -- would seem to be because of the eschatological pessimism which plagued that minority in their sufferings under the Pagan-Roman persecutions from 150 until 313 A.D.

After the triumph of Christianity at the nominal christianization of Pagan Rome (in A.D. 315-321), the chiliastic "double resurrections" theory was phased out of Christianity altogether -- for more than a thousand years! During the subsequent Post-Constantinian centuries of victorious Christianity, there are no traces of Chiliasm. It is totally absent from all of the many writings of Eusebius (A.D. 330), Athanasius (340), Aphrahat (350), Ephraim (360), Hilary (365), Basil (370), Cyril (375), Gregory of Nyssa (380), Gregory Nazianzen (385), Ambrose (390), Chrysostom (400), Sulpicius Severus (410), Jerome (415), and the mature Augustine (420).

Furthermore, it is also totally absent in all of the (strongly optimistic) Post-Augustinian Theologians right down to the climax of Christian influence in the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation and in Puritanism in the middle of the seventeenth century. Both the Early Lutherans and the Early Calvinists condemned Premillennialism. Instead, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (QQ. 191f) and the *Savoy Declaration* (26:4f) implicitly re-assert the **Biblical Postmillennialism** of the Earliest Church Fathers.

After the A.D. 310 Lactantius, only little groups like the Dutch Anabaptists and their successors kept the chiliastic theory alive on the very fringes of Christianity during the times after the Protestant Reformation. Indeed, prior to the advent of the very ungodly 1789-1815 A.D. French Revolution (and her subsequent daughters of Humanism and Socialism) -- Chiliasm was all but unknown. Not until Europe in the 1830s, did Revolutionary Pretribulationism ever develop. And it is only **since** then that **the modern revolutionary trend** -- with its ungodly opposition to and persecution of the truth -- has turned some Christians (by way of frustration) **away from victory** in this present age, **toward rapturistic defeatism**.

It is necessary for Christians to overcome the alien revolutionary spirit now prevalent in our modern world! God's people today must conquer the pessimistic spirit of Quasi-Christian defeatism which modern **Anti-Christ-ian** Revolutionists would so gladly encourage among Christians.

The Church of the twenty-first century must recover the optimistic spirit of a **victorious** Christianity. For that is the spirit of Jesus's first-century Apostles; of His second-century Apostolic Fathers; of His third-century Martyrs; of His fourth-century Conquerors; of His mediaeval *Corpus Christianum* Theologians; of His sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers; and of His seventeenth-century Puritans.

The Church of the twenty-first century must ditch Premillennialism, and instead once again become a Church of **Overcomers**. For there is absolutely no substitute for **Christian Victory**. And Christian Victory not just for the individual, but for **all the nations!**

So then, in the words of John's Revelation (15:4 & 20:6 & 21:24-26): "**All nations shall come and worship before You...** They (the nations) shall be priests of God..., and shall reign with Him **a thousand years...**

"**The nations shall walk in the light** [of the Holy City].... **The kings of the Earth...shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.**" Amen, hallelujah!

ENDNOTES

1) According to the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, the Messianic period was to commence in 5000 A.M. (= *Anno Mundi* alias 'after the creation of the World'). Thus the *Assumption of Moses* 1:1 & 10:29. Or in 6000 A.M. (thus *First Enoch* chs. 91 to 104 and *Second Enoch* 33:1

and *Second Baruch* 67). Or after "twelve parts" each of perhaps 500 years' duration (thus *Fourth Ezra* 14:11 and *Second Baruch* 53f) -- and not long after the +/- 107 B.C. writing down of the *Book of Jubilees* (chapter 15 & 23:30f). See too *First Enoch* and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* -- in P.A. Verhoef's *Messianic Expectation Between the Old and New Testament* (D.R.C. Pubs., Cape Town, 1959).

2) The *Book of Jubilees* says the future 'Golden Age' would gradually be realized by an ethical and physical transformation of the Earth during a 1000-year period, until international bliss and spiritual immortality was reached (*First Baruch* 5:1-7; the *Sibylline Oracles* III:46-50; *First Enoch* 10:21f; the *Testament of Levi* 4:3f & 18:2-12; the *Testament of Judah* 22:2; the *Testament of Zebulun* 9:8; the *Testament of Asher* 7:3; the *Testament of Joseph* 19:11f; *Jubilees* chapters 1 & 15 & 23:26-30f; and *DSS* in *Bened. 1 Q 5b* III:25,28). It was believed that this period would last: for 400 years (thus *Second Esdras* 7:28f); for 1000 years (thus *Second Enoch* 33:1 and *Jubilees* 23:26-29); temporarily for three "world-weeks" (thus *First Enoch* 91:12-19 & chapters 93 to 104); or permanently (thus *First Enoch* chapters 1 to 5 & 11:2 & 83 to 90).

3) *Jubilees* chapters 15 & 23:29; and the *Testament of Levi* 18:12.

4) *First Enoch* chapters 37 to 70 (esp. 51:1f & 61:5-8b & 91:9-11 & 100:5); the *Testament of Benjamin* 10:18; *Second Baruch* 30:1-5; and the *Sibylline Oracles* IV:187-91. Ancient Samaritan theology too knows of only one simultaneous physical resurrection of all (cf. M. Gaster's *Samaritan Eschatology*, pp. 114-18). Also the Post-Christian Judaistic *Talmud* (developing the previous ideas), knows nothing of the chiliastic doctrine of two chronologically-separated physical resurrections. Cf. W. Masselink's *Millennial Kingdom*, Meinema, Delft, 1932, pp. 30f.

5) The *Testament of Judah* 25:1,4; *Second Esdras* 7:28-35; *Second Maccabees* 7:9-11,14,23 & 12:44 & 14:46; *First Enoch* chapters 37 to 71 & 91:10 and chapters 91 to 104 and esp. 100:5.

6) See M. Kline's *First Resurrection* (in *Westminster Theological Journal*, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Spring 1975). There, Kline points out that the "first resurrection" guarantees escape from the second death in Revelation 20:5-6 -- thus suggesting spiritual resurrection or regeneration (John 3:3-8). Kline also points out that it is a "first resurrection" rather than a 'new resurrection' -- thus implying an event within time and not at the end of it. Cf. the similar use of the word "first" [within time] in Hebrews 8:7,13 & 9:1,18 & 10:9. See too (in Revelation 21:1-2) the use of the word "new" at the end of time.

7) Augustine's *The City of God*, XX:6-13.

8) Edwards, J.: *The History of Redemption*, Sovereign Grace Book Club, Evansville, 1959 ed., Period III Part II Section I, Application Secondly II:236.

9) Gill, J.: *Exposition of the New Testament* III (on Rev. 20:7f).

10) Metzger, W.: *The In-Between Kingdom* (in loco etc. therein). And Rissi, M.: *The Future of the World*, subtitled *An Exegetical Study of Revelation 19:11 to 22:15*, Zwingli Press, Zürich, 1972, pp. 35f & 99.

11) Erasmus, the 16th-century Catholic Theologian, in Revelation 21:24 of his 1516 A.D. critical edition of the *Textus Receptus*, wrongly inserted into the canonical words "the nations shall walk in the light" of New Jerusalem City -- the uninspired phrase 'of them which are saved.' Thus, his expanded version reads "the nations (of them which are saved) shall walk in the light of it." Erasmus got this uninspired phrase from comments on the Biblical text made by the seventh-century A.D. Andreas and the 860-912 A.D. Arethas of Caesarea, both of whom lived when and where Islam was demolishing churches catastrophically. This defeatist comment has done great damage to Pessimillennialists (as if not all "the nations" but only some nations end up getting saved)! Per contra, however, see Isaiah 66:23 and Matthew 28:19a and Mark 16:15b and Revelation 15:4!! Erasmus' added comment is omitted from the 2nd edition of the British and Foreign Bible Society's Greek Testament (based on Nestle and Kilpatrick). May God enable the Church to finish the task of the Great Commission!!!

12) Cf. the *Didachee* 10:5 & 14:3; *Barnabas* 6:12-19 & chapter 12; *First Clement* chapters 33 & 36f; *Hermas* I:3:4,8 & I:4:2; Ignatius's *Epistles to the Magnesians* 1:13f & 2:10-14 and *To Polycarp* chapter 3; and *Diognetus* chapters 5 & 7.

13) Thus even the Premillennialist Irenaeus (*op. cit.* V:33:4).

14) Papias (*Fragment IV* in the Eerdmans ed. of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* I:153f) describes a future time of plentiful earthly activity reminiscent not only of that described in the (apparently postmillennial) approximately B.C. 220 *Apocalypse of Baruch* 29:5 & chapters 50 & 51, the approximately 170f B.C. *Sybilline Oracles* III:744f, and the approximately B.C. 130 *Ethiopic Enoch* 10:19 (and also in the *Midrash on Genesis* 27:28) -- but, more remotely, described from B.C. 800 onward also in the Older Testament itself (Amos 9:13f and Isaiah 20:23-26). Note, however, that there are no extant writings of the A.D. 145 Papias himself. All we know about his teachings, is recorded in the writings of the A.D. 185 Premillennialist Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* V:32 & V:33:3f & V:36), and in those of the A.D. 320 Postmillennialist Eusebius (*Church History* III:39:8-12).

15) Eusebius in *op. cit.* III:36:2 n. 3 seems to have called Papias "a man most learned in all things" -- but at III:39:13, a man "of very limited understanding" (*sic!*). Eusebius obviously disapproves of what he regards as Papias's crass materialism; and alleges Papias "says that there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this Earth."

Yet Eusebius does not teach that Papias was a Chiliast who believed in two resurrections widely separated from one another. Moreover, Papias's *Fragment I* (from Eusebius *Church History* III:39) is truly Anti-Antinomian; and *Fragment V* (from Irenaeus's *Heresies* V:36) citing First Corinthians 15:25-28) is perhaps even Postmillennial!

16) Cf. Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* V:30-36 with Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (81f), and the partial absorption (by Tertullian in Phrygian Carthage) of Semi-Montanistic Chiliasm from Phrygia in Asia Minor. See D.H. Kromminga's book *The Millennium in the Church*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1945, pp. 77f. This Phrygian Neo-Chiliasm, is significant. For Phrygia in Asia Minor seems to have been the central dissemination point of this 2nd to 3rd century A.D. brand of Chiliasm on the fringes of Christianity.

The heretic Cerinthus (A.D. 100f) was also a Chiliast who hailed from Phrygia. See Douglas's *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1974, p. 207. Papias (A.D. 145) and Justin Martyr (A.D. 150) both seem to have been in contact with that region. And so too do Irenaeus (A.D. 185) and the A.D. 220 Tertullian (thus Kromminga's *op. cit.* pp 29 & 44 & 53 & 77 & 89). No doubt Cerinthus picked up the "Phrygian heresy" of Chiliasm from those more-eastern Asian quarters of Persia and Babylon.

Even Augustine (*City of God* 20:7) -- himself chiliastic during the earlier period of his Manichaeian and Post-Manichaeian life prior to his conversion to Christ(ianity) -- appears to have derived that Chiliasm from Persian Manichaeism. Van der Leeuw & Bleeker's volumes *The Religions of the World*, Meulenhoff, Amsterdam, 1956, II:136.

Moreover, it should be noted that the Chiliast Justin Martyr was also rationalistic and subordinationistic. The Chiliast Irenaeus upheld other doctrinal errors too -- holding to baptismal regenerationism, episcopalianism, and believing that Lot's wife continued menstruating even after being turned into a pillar of salt.

Even the offbeat suspected Chiliast Tertullian was both legalistic and Semi-Montanistic. Modern Premillennialists who appeal to the assumed 'Chiliasm' of Justin and Irenaeus and Tertullian -- assuming them to be orthodox in all their theology (so that their Chiliasm too should then also be deemed to be orthodox) -- should therefore be evaluated with caution, if not even with some scepticism.

17) Eusebius's *Church History* (X:2-4). Also Athanasius's *On the Incarnation of the Word of God* (40 & 55); Ephraim the Syrian's *Hymn on the Nativity* (XVIII:1,6); Basil's *On the Six Days* (V:7); Hilary's *Homilies on the Psalms*; Cyril's *Catechetical Lectures* (15:1-3); Gregory of Nyssa's *Epistles* (17); Gregory of Nazianze's *Orations* (7:24); Ambrose's *Duties of the Clergy* (I:28:132f), his *On the Christian Faith* (V:14:181), and his *Enarrations in the Psalms* (43:7); Chrysostom's *Fourth Homily on Second Thessalonians*; Jerome's *Epistles* (53) and his *Commentary on Daniel* (2:40); and Augustine's *City of God* (18:47f & 20:9 & 22:1,24), his *Fourth Treatise on the Gospel of John* (4), and his *Against Faustus* (13:7).

Post-Augustinian Postmillennialists would include: Vincent of Lerinum (*Common Places* 23:547); and Gregory the Great (*Epistle* 53). Also Bede of Yarrow (*Explanation of the Apocalypse*, in J.P. Migne's *Patrologia Latina* XCIII col. 146f); Alcuin of York (*Commentary on the Apocalypse*, in Migne's *op. cit.* C cols. 1085 & 1156); Bruno of Segni (*Expositions*, in Migne's *op. cit.* CLXV cols. 667f); and Anselm of Canterbury (*Dialogues*, in Migne's *op. cit.* CLXXXVIII cols. 1149f). Also Joachim of Floris (*Exposition of the Apocalypse*, 1527 ed., fols. 210r. cf. 84v & 211v cf. 16r); Thomas Aquinas (*Exposition of Daniel* ch. 2 p. 15 & ch. 7 pp. 34f in *Opera Omnia* XVIII and *Summa Theologiae* pp. 105-12); Roger Bacon's *Compendium Eludii Philosophiae*; Pierre d'Olivi (*Postilla on the Apocalypse*, Paris, fol. 18 r. col. 1 line 32 to col. 2 line 15); and Ubertino (*Arbor Vitae* V ch. 12 and *Tract.* ch. 8 fol. 78 r).

Further Postmillennialists include John Wycliffe (*Concerning the Truth of Holy Scripture*, Truebner, 1905f ed., III:267f), and his *Concerning the Power of the Pope* (ch. II); Matthias of Janow; Nicholas de Cusa (*Opera Conjectura* pp. 933f); and Savonarola (*Predica della Rinnovazione* III and his *Sermon of March 1498*). Also Christopher Columbus (as cited in

Harris's *Notes on Columbus* pp. 139f and in Draper's *History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, Harper & Row, New York, 1876, II:159f).

That Augustinian, Post-Augustinian and Puritan Theologians were all Anti-Pretribulational and even largely Postmillennialistic -- is generally conceded even by most Premillennialists. See L.E. Froom's *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, Review & Herald, Washington D.C., I-IV, 1945f; Kromminga's *op. cit.*; and J. Walvoord's *The Millennial Kingdom*, Dunham Pub. Co., Findlay Oh., 1959.

18) J. Knox: *History of the Reformation in Scotland, 1544* -- in his *Works*, Edinburgh, 1846-64 Woodrow Society ed., I:273. Cited in Ridley's *John Knox*, 1968, p. 327 -- and in the *Scots Confession 25:2* (co-authored chiefly by Knox).

19) For particulars, see F.N. Lee: *Christocratic Postmillennialism 4000 B.C. to 2000 A.D.*, Wavell Heights, Australia, unpub., 1999.

20) See the Premillennialist Dave MacPherson's books: *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin* (1973) Heart of America Bible Soc., Kansas City, Mo., pp. 105-8; his *The Late Great Pre-Trib Rapture* (1974); and also his *The Incredible Cover-Up: The True Story of the Pre-Trib Rapture* (1975).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR ----->

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Though Dr. Lee's father was an Atheist, he married a Roman Catholic who raised their son Nigel in that faith.

For the Second World War, Dr. Lee's father was appointed Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Dr. Lee became a Calvinist; had the great joy of leading both of his parents to Christ; and became a Minister of God's Word in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., he attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his previous ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in New Jersey; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; and Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol Tennessee. He was then the only person in the world serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society (headquartered in London) and the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States (headquartered in Atlanta).

Preacher, theologian, lawyer, educationist, historian, philosopher and author, Lee has produced more than 191 publications (including many books) and also more than 537 long unpublished manuscripts. In addition to an honorary LL.D., he has twenty earned degrees -- including some eleven earned doctorates awarded for dissertations in law, literature, philosophy and theology. He was till his retirement in 2000 for 20 years the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College in Australia.

