

Eschatology

Lesson One – The Millennium

I) Intro

Eschatology — from “eschatos” (“last”) and “logos” (“word” or “subject”)

Why study eschatology? It will happen whether I understand it or not, yes?

See 2 Peter 3:12 – it appears that we can play an active role in bringing about these final things.

See Daniel 9:1-19 – why would Daniel respond with sackcloth’s, ashes and prayer when he already knew what was going to happen – and when it was going to happen?

A passenger in a vehicle does not need to know where one is going. But if the passenger is to become a driver, then the needs of that passenger must change. Are you driving or riding as a passenger?

II) Understanding some terms

- A. **Exegesis – (Latin from Greek)** To understand what message the Scripture is trying to relay - letting the passage speak.
- B. **Eisegesis** – What we bring to the Scriptures in our studies – us speaking to the passage. (ex: Gen 1:1-2)
- C. **Historical-Grammatical Approach** – A method of Biblical interpretation that seeks to understand the historical setting of scripture and the language (figures of speech, hyperbole & genre) being used.
- D. **Millennium** – Latin; “mille” (1000) and “annus” (years). It is a reference to a period of time mentioned six times in Rev 20.
- E. **Second Coming** – (the phrase is never used in the Bible) The concept is pretty clear in Acts 1:11. In Hebrews 9:28 we read of Christ’s appearing “a second time.”
- F. **Rapture** – Latin *raptus* 1 Thess. 4:17 “caught up” & 1 Cor 15:51-52
- G. **Pre-Millennialism** – The rapture of the Church comes *before* the millennial reign of Christ.

One of the strongest arguments for this view is that it was held by many of the earliest Church Fathers. It seems to be the position of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Papias, Polycarp and Irenaeus. Papias, Polycarp and Irenaeus were born around in the first century, were believed to have known some of the apostles.

Q: If John taught Polycarp, and Polycarp taught Irenaeus, then how could one argue against Pre-Millennialism?

A: Paul himself taught the Church in Galatia, yet very shortly after he departed, he learned that they had slipped into error (Gal. 1:6, 3:1)

Q: If so many of the early Church Fathers believed in Pre-Millennialism, then how can we argue that it is wrong?

A: To say that **many** of the Church Fathers held to pre-millennialism is not entirely supported. First, we do not have a lot of information from the first three centuries of church writers. Secondly, Justin Martyr wrote:

"I am not so miserable a fellow, Trypho, as to say one thing and think another. I admitted to you formerly, that I and many others are of this opinion [pre-millennialism], and [believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware but, on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise." Dialogue With Trypho

- H. **Post-Millennialism** – The rapture of the Church comes *after* the millennial reign of Christ. Post-millennialists believe that the 1000 year reign of Christ is literal.
- I. **A-millennialism** – The rapture of the Church comes *after* the millennial reign of Christ – which is seen as a non-literal, spiritual event.
- J. **Dispensationalism** - a system of interpretation as seen through major distributions of God's dealings with humanity. Each dispensation begins with a command of God, and ends with judgment. The seven dispensations are:
 - 1. **Innocence** - from Creation(Gen. 1) to the Fall in (Gen. 3)
 - 2. **Conscience** – from the Fall (Gen. 3) to the flood (Gen 7)
 - 3. **Government** – from the Flood to promise given to Abraham (Gen 12)
 - 4. **Promise** – from Abraham to Mt. Sinai (Ex 20).
 - 5. **Law** – from Sinai to the Cross or Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - 6. **Grace** – from Pentecost to the Rapture.
 - 7. **Kingdom or Millennium** – from Second Coming until The end of the Millennium. This view holds that the Jews rejected the offer of Jesus' kingdom, and so He withdrew the offer. He will offer it again after His Second Coming.

III) Understanding the Millennium

This may be the single most important concept in appreciating scripture. Your view of the millennium will dictate how you view many passages of scripture.

- A. In **Genesis 12:1-3**, God made a promise to Abraham. This promise is the building block of Jewish faith. How we understand that promise is very important.
- B. Throughout the remainder of the Old Testament the writers spoke of the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. The passages that speak of that fulfillment are understood as **the great kingdom passages**.
- C. The **kingdom passages** indicate that God would raise up a Messiah, who would be given a kingdom of everlasting peace, justice and righteousness.

- D. Understanding Rev 20 – Does the Second Coming come before or after the Millennium? The Pre-millennialist believes that The Second Coming comes before Rev 20 (in Rev 19). The Post-Millennialist and the A-Millennialist agree that the Second Coming comes later in Rev 20. **If we can answer this question, then we can probably understand which if these views are correct.****
- a. Rev 20 can be broken down into four main sections
 - i. Verses 1-3 describe the binding and imprisonment of Satan
 - ii. Verses 4-6 describe the 1000 year reign of the saints with Christ.
 - iii. Verses 7-9 describe “the little while” (see vs 3) that Satan is released and subsequently defeated.
 - iv. Verses 10-15 describe the judgment scene.
- E. The Pre-Millennialist sees Rev 19:11-21 as the Second Coming. Let’s examine the chapter:**
- i. White horse? We do not find any other Second Coming description of Christ as coming on a horse. We were told that he would return in the same manner that he left (Acts 1:11). Some see this passage as a description of the gospel going through the world during the Church age. See Zechariah 10:3-4.
 - ii. The sword. Is not the word of the Lord the sword of the Spirit? See Heb 4:12 & Eph 6:17.
 - iii. Even if Rev 19 is a description of the Second Coming, it is not always given in the book of Rev that things move seamlessly in a chronological order. See Rev 11 – 12. Also see Dan 2 & 7 which seem to describe the same period of time.
- F. Perhaps Rev 20 describes Christ’s Second Coming near its end? Let’s examine the evidence for this theory:**
- i. (20:9-10) describes fire coming down from heaven to consume God’s enemies. **See II Thess. 1:7-8, II Thess. 2:8**
 - ii. (20:11) The old heavens and earth pass, while Rev 21 begins with a new heaven and earth. **See II Peter 3:10-13**
 - iii. (20:12-13) A resurrection of, and judgment of the dead occurs. **See II Tim 4:1, Matt 25:31-32, John 5:28-28**
 - iv. (20:14) Death and Hades are cast into the Lake of Fire (second death). **See 1 Cor. 15:26 & 52-55** (there can be no more enemies to destroy! How can Pre-M be correct when it teaches there will be more enemies after the SC?)
 - v. **Conclusion: Either the Post-Millennium view or A-Millennium view must be correct.**
- G. Let’s go back to the beginning of Rev 20 and see if we can understand if Post-M or A-M is correct.**
- i. Could the binding of Satan (vs 1-3) refer to what Jesus did at His first Coming?

1. Note the symbolism of Rev 20:1-3 (dragon, serpent and 1000 years). Re: 1000 see Dt 1:11, Dt 7:9, 32:30, Ps 50:10, Ps 84:10, Ps 90:4, II Peter 3:8.
2. Binding of Satan? Note Mark 3:23-27 – Jesus uses the symbol of binding Satan. Luke 11:21-22, Col. 2:15, John 12:31, Heb 2:14 (render inactive). Satan was “bound” so that he cannot deceive “the nations.” 20:13
 - ii. Could the 1000 years be a reference to the Church Age? Where are these saints? In heaven or on earth? If in heaven then they are between their martyrdom and resurrection – which is the Church age (now).
 - iii. Did the saints “live again” or did they “come to life?” See Rev 2:8 & 13:14.
 - iv. What about the “little while” when Satan is loosed?

Rev 20	Questions
1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.	Are these literal or symbolic? – key, chain, hand, bottomless pit, dragon, serpent, bound by chain, seal 1000 years – literal or symbolic? See Deut 1:11, Deut 7:9, 32:30, Ps 50:10, Ps 84:10, Ps 90:4, II Peter 3:8 (to name a few).
4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.	Who are the “souls?” Are they on the earth or in heaven? Lived = Greek “ezesan” found only 2 other places in Rev (2:8 & 13:14). How is it best understood here? What is the first resurrection? What is the second? See John 5:24-25, Eph. 2:1 & Col. 2:13.
Rev 20:7-10 7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. 9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.	Does “fire from heaven” speak of the Second Coming? (See II Thess. 1:7-8, II Thess. 2:8)
Rev 20:11-15 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.	Could the fleeing of “earth and heaven” speak of the Second Coming? See II Peter 3:10-13 & Matt 24:35. Note Rev 21 begins with a new heaven and earth; possibly because the old had vanished? Does this judgment scene possibly depict something occurring at the Second Coming? See John 5:28-29, II Tim 4:1, Matt 25:31-33 Are death and Hades the last enemy to die? See 1 Cor. 15:26 & 52-55. If the last enemy dies at this point, then how can there be a final attack by the Devil as the Pre-millennialist claims?

Old Testament Descriptions of the Messianic Era (the Kingdom Age)
fulfilled in the New Testament

chart prepared by Steve Gregg

O.T. Passage	Davidic Kingdom	Gentiles Subdued	Exiles return 2nd Exodus Highway to Zion	Peace and Prosperity	Temple Worship	Salvation Restoration	Everlasting duration	N.T. References and allusions
Psalms 72	verse 1	verses 8-11	verse 4	vs. 3, 7, 16	-	vs. 12-14	vs. 5, 7, 17, 19	-
Isaiah 2:2-4	-	verses 2-4	-	verse 4	verse 2	-	-	-
Isa. 9:1-7	verses 6-7	—	-	verses 3, 7	—	verse 4	verse 7	Matt. 4:12-17
Isa. 11:1-16	verse 1	vs. 13-14	vs. 11f, 15f	verses 6-9	-	-	-	Romans 15:10
Isa. 35:1-10	-	-	vs. 8-10	-	-	vs. 1-7	verse 10	Hebrews 12:12 Matthew 11:1-6
Jeremiah 30-33	30:9 33:15, 17, 21-22	30:16	30:3, 10 31:8-10, 21 32:37, 44	30:19-20 33:6	31:14 33:18, 21f	30:7-8, 17 31:11, 34 33:8, 16	32:39-40	Matthew 2:17f Luke 22:20 Hebrews 8:7-13 13:20
Ezekiel 34 and 37	34:23-24 37:24-25	34:28-29	34:11-13 37:21	34:14-16 25-29	37:26-28	34:22 37:23	37:26-28	John 10:11, 14 Hebrews 13:20
Joel 2:28-3:21	-	3:4-7	3:1	3:18	-	2:32 3:21	3:20	Acts 2:16-21
Amos 9:11ff	verse 11	verse 12	verses 14-15	verse 13	—	-	verse 15	Acts 15:14-17
Zechariah 14	-	vs. 3, 14, 16-19	-	-	vs. 16-21	vs. 10-11	-	John 7:37-39
Additional Passages	II Sam. 7:12ff Isaiah 55:3	Isaiah 66:20	Isaiah 10:21	numerous	Ezek. 40:38f 43:18 Isaiah 66:21	Isaiah 45:17 59:20-21 Jer. 23:6	Daniel 2:44 7:13-14	
Fulfilled:	Acts 2:29ff 13:32ff	Romans 15:16	John 11:51f Romans 9:27	John 14:27 16:33/Eph. 2:14-17	Heb. 7:12 10:1-10, 18	Romans 11:25-26	II Cor. 4:18 Heb. 5:9	