

PRE, POST, AND OPEN WIDE AND SAY, "AH" Studies in the Revelation

"Blessed is he who (1) reads and those who (2) hear the words of the prophecy, and (3) heed the things which are written in it; (why) for the time is near.
Revelation 1:3

THE THREE VIEWS OF THE MILLENNIUM:

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him (how long) for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, (why) so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until (when) the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.
Revelation 20:1-3

Premillennial View:

- Christ will physically come and return to earth to set up a literal, 1,000 year, world-wide reign.
- It is the only conclusion from Scripture if you consistently interpret it literally.
- Views the Church and Israel as two separate entities: with separate beginnings, purposes, missions and futures.
- The world will grow increasingly worse until Christ returns.
- It best explains the unconditional land-promise to Abraham and his descendants - (Gen 12, 14-15).
- It also best explains the unconditional promise / covenant to David - (2 Sam. 7)
- Explains the unfulfilled Old Testament promises about a Messianic age.
- Explains how in Romans 11 the promise is made that Israel will be restored.
- Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, etc.

Postmillennial View:

- Christ will return after the end of the Millennial reign (which is not a literal 1,000 years) to set up His kingdom.

- The church (not the Second Coming) will inaugurate the Millennium.
- Requires an allegorical interpretation of Scripture.
- The preaching of the Gospel throughout the world will gradually and eventually Christianize it.
- The Millennium will be a time of great peace and prosperity right before Christ comes.
- Whereas the pre-millennial view says that things will get increasingly worse until Christ returns, the post-millennial view believes just the opposite: the world will become more like Christ right before His return.
- According to this view, the binding of Satan is a present event, and not a future one.

Amillennial View:

- Literally means, "no Millennium" - but they do not deny the statements in Rev. 20, but do deny that Christ will come to set up a literal, physical, earthly millennial reign on earth.
- They view the Old Testament unfulfilled predictions to Israel are fulfilled spiritually in the church.
- They hold the view that Israel has been set aside and replaced with the Church. Hence, in the plan of God, there is no distinction between Israel and the Church.
- They believe we are in the Millennium now and that is it not a future event.
- Requires an allegorical interpretation of Scripture.
- Also believes the binding of Satan is present and not future.

SUMMARY:

The distinction between the various views of the end-times are hermeneutical in nature. For example:

A consistent literal interpretation of Revelation 20 speaks of two resurrections, one before and one after the 1,000 year reign of Christ.

A consistent literal interpretation of the Old and New Testament shows that Israel's future is distinct from the Church.

CONCLUSION:

To deny premillennialism is to deny the consistent literal interpretation of the Scriptures:

- Non-premillennialism takes part of the Bible non-literally.
- Non-premillennialism takes prophecy regarding the Advent literally, but takes some of the prophecy concerning the Second Coming allegorically.
- Non-premillennialism takes part of the Gospel literally (for example: Christ's death and resurrection), but not all His statements about His return.
- Non-premillennialism applies both literalism and allegory to the same sentence (see Isa. 61:1-2 and Luke 4:18-21).
- Non-premillennialism takes the second resurrection literally and the first spiritually.

QUESTION:

Why? On what basis can you or I or anybody determine what is to be taken literally and what is allegory?

One, if a literal interpretation of a Scripture is rejected, who is to determine the non-literal or spiritual meaning of the Scripture?

Two, if we take a non-literal view of Scripture, what did the passages mean to the people to whom they were originally spoken? For example, if prophecies meant for fulfillment by the Church were spoken to Israel, did God give revelation to Israel that failed to reveal what He wanted them to know? What meaning could prophecies made to Israel, but meant for the Church, have in their historical setting?

Three, what about, for example, the words spoken to Mary in Luke 1:31-33? If we believe that Mary literally bore Christ and literally named Him Jesus, how can we then say the prophecy regarding Him ruling forever on David's throne over Israel is allegory? Who makes that decision?

Finally, if other numbers in the Revelation are interpreted literally (144,000 , 7 seals, 3 unclean spirits, 1,260 days, 24 elders, etc.) then why is the 1,000 year reign to be interpreted as allegory? Who makes that decision?