

Revelation 6: 1; The 4 Major Views of Revelation - Part 9,
"Post-Millennialism", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on March 18th, 2007,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.

Read Revelation 20: 1-10

Last week I attempted to show you the fallacy of believing that there can be a Millennium after Christ's Second Coming. I attempted to prove this by showing you that Christ's Second Coming and the resurrection of the dead are one great and glorious event. Once Christ has returned, and the bodily resurrection of the dead has taken place, then there is no need, and no place for a Millennium. All the dead will be raised in the same "hour" of time when Christ returns. The judgment of the world will follow. A new age will come. There will be New Heavens and New Earth. If there is a Millennium, then, it must come before the Second Coming of Christ. So let us ask some questions this afternoon to help us understand this subject better.

1st of all - Is the time of the Millennium during the whole of the Church age, from the time of Christ's ministry until His Second Coming?

In looking at this text, I cannot believe that it is so. I believe that this passage teaches us that it is a more specific period of time, of great gospel prosperity, which will take place "a little season" longer than "a thousand years" before Christ returns. I believe that this thousand years time period will be literal, but its meaning is spiritual and symbolic of what will be given to the Church. What will be given, will be victory over all the kingdoms and nations of the world, in the preaching of the gospel and making disciples; the ultimate fulfillment of the great commission. This is, of course, based solely on Christ's reward given to Him by the Father which is found in Psalm 2. In verse 8 it says, "Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession." He, in turn, gives the grace and power to preach and to see the greater blessed results. All that happens in chapter 20 is a great new development in relation to what has gone before, in the book of Revelation. There is a reason for this. If we took the time, now, to look at the context of Chapters 16-19 we would find that the vials of God's wrath have been poured out on the Antichristian system, the greatest of all of Satan's great strategies to oppose Christ's kingdom, and it has been overthrown. Babylon the Harlot, and mother of harlots, has been thrown down. This then sets the stage for what we see here in Chapter 20, which is the raising of the Christ's cause and kingdom from the dead. It is not the resurrection of the dead. It is not Christ's second coming. You say to me, "But isn't the picture of Christ on the white horse, with the armies of heaven behind Him, the picture of His Second Coming?" I reply; It might appear to be that, at first glance. There is a great spiritual battle there, and Christ is pictured as poised to ride from heaven to earth, but there is no bodily resurrection from the dead that is mentioned. That is not found until after the Millennium in chapter 20, verses 11-15.

Christ's Second Coming may be thought to be taking place in Chapter 19, but I am convinced that it is not. It is rather the picture of a spiritual coming of Christ to destroy the Devil's greatest and most deceptive work; a work which he raised up in form of the second beast, the false prophet, and the false church which, taken altogether, is Babylon the Great. We are going to find, in our study of the book of Revelation, that there is another spiritual coming of Christ mentioned in Chapter 6, verses 12-17. There it is spoken of in terms of the downfall of the pagan Roman Empire, the false worship of the Emperors, and the severe persecution of Christians by them. It is the end of a world, but it is not the end of the world. Here, similarly, in Chapter 19 we find a second great spiritual coming, but not the Second Coming. Verse 15 is the key to this spiritual coming. It says there, "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword, that with it He should strike the nations." How does He strike them? It is with the double-edged sword which proceeds from His mouth. He conquers this false system of Babylon the great by the preaching of His word, through His servants and ministers. It is accomplished by a greater pouring out of the Spirit than has been seen in any generation since the days of the Apostles. The victory which results, is pictured in Chapter 20 as "they lived and reigned with Christ a Thousand years." The Millennium of Chapter 20 follows upon this destruction of false Babylon in Chapter 19. All those who have suffered and died in their witness and testimony for the Lord Jesus in all the Church age have a share in this; a spiritual share. It is the resurrection and triumph of the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ upon the earth and among the nations that is being spoken of here. It is everything that every suffering saint of Jesus Christ was striving to see come to pass in their particular generation. That triumph, which comes in this spiritual battle which is fought and won by Christ working by the power of His Word and Spirit through His Church in chapter 19, sets the stage for the Church coming to reign upon the earth in the Millennium of Chapter 20. The "souls" of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, and the souls of those who had not worshiped the Antichristian beast or his image--these, it says, "lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." This is not a physical resurrection, although it is called "the first resurrection" in verse 5. What it means is this; that the Cause of truth and righteousness, the Cause of gospel salvation and the desire of faithful believers to see that Cause conquering among the nations, will take place because of the spiritual resurrection of the church. The Church is pictured as grappling with the great problem of the Antichristian forces since Chapter 11.

Turn with me to Revelation Chapter 11. (See Ezekiel 4: 5 and Numbers 14: 34 for the establishment of this principle of application of the Day-Year Theory) Read verses 1-10. Here the Church of Jesus Christ is called the temple of God. The fulfillment of everything which is pictured as literally Jewish, in the book of Revelation, is found to be a spiritual reality in the Church. And the temple (the New Testament Church) is being measured. The measuring rod is God's Word, and the outer court is given to Gentiles, those people and churches who profess to be true

Christians but who are in churches that teach error in regard to God's Word. This cause of the true Church, making disciples to Jesus Christ, toward the end of the 42 months, which is the same period of time as the 1260 days (or years) of Antichristian dominion; has fallen very low all over the world, we are told in Revelation 11. It is even slain and it even dies in those 10 kingdoms of the Beast's rule after the witness' testimony is finished. This is the picture of the 2 Witnesses being slain in verse 7. It is the picture of the Church's true worship, and her true exercise of discipline which are "slain," This what is meant by the 2 witnesses, and they are thought by the whole world to be dead. But, as it says in Revelation 11: 11, "Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them." This verse I believe is connected the words of Chapter 20, verse 4, "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them." "Then I saw the souls of those...And they lived," etc. How did they live? They live in the triumph of the preached word, which comes with great power in that day. But not without a spiritual resurrection, that breath of life from God, the Holy Spirit, that will be poured out upon the languishing, dying Church. This will result in great conversion work and persons being saved in great numbers. Life from the dead will come to Church and to the cause of Christ.

Now we can speak of the actual length of time of the Millennium once again. When Satan is bound, time in this prophecy will be counted in a straightforward manner once again, and the duration of the Millennium can be spoken of openly. It shall be a thousand years. At this point in the prophecy of the book of Revelation, there is no longer any need, for the vision to speak in veiled or mystical terms of time, anymore, when it comes to the length of time of the Church's triumph. Now the Church of Jesus Christ will look forth "as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and awesome as an army with banners." What went before, in terms of the 1260 years, was 1 symbolic day for a literal year, in regard to the prophecy of the duration of the Antichristian powers. But when we come to Revelation chapter 20, we find 1,000 years being spoken of as a symbolic day. It is called "the thousand years" as one unit, in verse 5. The Apostle Peter says in 2 Peter 3: 8, "But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." There will be a Millennial Day. It will last, I believe, a thousand years literally. When it will begin is a matter of great speculation. It may not be obvious to discern it's beginning at all. A day begins at midnight and there are some hours of darkness before the dawn. How long Satan's little season is, at the end of the Millennium is not stated in the Scriptures either, and so it will be impossible to know when Christ's coming will take place. "No man knows, or shall know, the hour or the day."

But I believe that the Bible itself teaches us that prophecy is matter of exact and specific historic fulfillments. Some are prophecies of an exact number of literal years which are mentioned as such. Remember what is said by Daniel of himself in Daniel chapter 9, verse 2. "In the first year of Darius the Mede, I Daniel understood by the

books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." These 70 years were literal years. Then you also remember what is said in Daniel 9:27. "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy." These are weeks of years; a year for day, seventy times seven. It would be 490 years until Christ's death and following that would be the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. It was a time most certainly fixed and determined. When we come to the book of Revelation we find that the times are like the last example that I mentioned. They are a year for a day in every part of the prophetic section except this place in Revelation 20. Then it is altered, and a day becomes a thousand years, because Christ's kingdom has triumphed.

As we come to think about when the Millennium might begin, we must be humble enough to admit that it may not be our time yet, to see the greatest advancements of the Church. We may not be able to determine precisely, ourselves, when this glorious time may come. It may in fact be true, that our generation or a coming generation may have to face the greatest darkness and discouragement, in regard to Christ's kingdom, that any generation since the reformation has seen. It is God who holds the times and the seasons of the Church, and the outworking of the advancement of Christ's kingdom in His hands. So we may not know exactly when the Millennium will begin. We are told that it will come, in Revelation 11, after the 1260 days prophecy is finished. But when, exactly, did these prophetic years begin? Much speculation has taken place among Post-Millennialists about when those days began, which refer to the rise and establishment of the Antichrist in his persecuting power. But the exact date is hard to determine. I will speak more of this when we come to Revelation chapter 11. But there is a specific and set time in God's decree, and in His holy mind. Listen to Psalm 102, verses 12-17. "But You, O Lord, shall endure forever, and the remembrance of Your name to all generations." "You will arise and have mercy on Zion; for the time to favor her, yes the set time, has come." "For Your servants take pleasure in her stones, and show favor to her dust." "So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth Your glory." "For the Lord shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory." "He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, and shall not despise their prayer." We ought to learn to pray in the words of these verses that God would build up Zion, as we study to know whether the "set time" has come.

2ndly- We should ask of the text and ask of all the Bible, "What will the Millennium be like?"

As I have already indicated to you, it will be a joyful reality in the experience of the church around the world, that Satan will be bound. When I say this, I am not saying that Satan will not be able to obtain personal permission to tempt and test the faith of individual believers. This will continue, and especially in conjunction with

the lusts of the flesh and the pull of the world to lead the Christian into sin. Satan's binding according to the verses that we have read in Revelation 20 will be specifically related to his ability to "deceive the nations." Satan deceived the nations in raising up great systems of evil and error to take and hold captive, large groupings of people in the world. He has done this with all the pagan religions of the world. He has especially done it, however, with false Judaism, Islam, and with his master deception of Roman Catholicism and all the daughters of that false church. This is where Satan will be bound. All of the organized oppositions of Satan in these great strategies to deceive and to persecute the Church will be defeated, and great will be the blessing to all of the nations of the earth. No longer will there be the confusion that exists now about how a person is saved and comes to know Christ. No more will sacramental salvation be preached or a Pope and priests lead people to think that they can be saved by their good works. No longer will the false prophet Mohammed deceive one third of the world's population with lies. No longer will the Jews reject their Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. It truly will be a great revelation of Jesus Christ to the world.

"How will this come about," you ask? The answer is, that it could never come about unless there is to be a greater measure and influence of the Holy Spirit's working in the world and in the hearts of men than there is presently. And this is indeed what is prophesied. Turn with me to Ezekiel 39. If we were to take the time to do an in-depth study of this chapter we would find in verses 17-20 a picture that is very much like the one we saw in Revelation 19. Indeed, I believe that they refer to the same event; the defeat of the Antichristian forces. It describes a great battle in verses 1-10, a destruction of the weapons of war, and a burial of the enemies of the nation of Israel who fought in that battle, in verses 11-16. It describes a sacrificial meal which will not be understood by the Jews and the nations of the world at first. It is called "the supper of the great God," in Revelation 19: 17. It will be something that the nations of the world will take notice of. I believe that this great battle is both physically and spiritually related to the Millennium. Those nations that would destroy the Jews shall be destroyed. Those spiritual forces which supported that action, and those who wished to continue to deceive the nations of the world as to the truth of the gospel shall be defeated. But it says in verse 21 of Ezekiel 39: "I will set my glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them." "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward." "The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them." "I gave them into their enemies, and they all fell by the sword." "According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them." "Therefore thus says the Lord God: Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name." Verse 27 says, "When I have brought them back from the people and gathered them out of their enemies lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of

many nations, then they shall they know that I am the Lord their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer." "And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel, says the Lord God."

This is how the Millennium will be brought in; by the pouring out of God's Spirit on the house of Israel to bring about their conversion. This will bring "life from the dead" to the Church. Listen to Romans 11: 12, "Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!" Verse 15- "For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" This is a spiritual resurrection, and it is linked with the Millennium. This I connect with "the first resurrection" of Revelation 20. It will be "life from the dead" to the Church and the Jews who will be brought into it. We will speak more of what the Millennium will be like, the next time that I speak to you.