

## **Don't Miss the Millennium**

Rev. 20:1-10

#37 in our series "The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation"

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October 28, 2018

10-27/28-18

### **Prayer**

Lord God, we ask that you would help us to preach. And I pray for those who haven't been a part of our Revelation so far, I pray that you would miraculously minister to their brains. Help us, through the power of your Holy Spirit, to see you. We surrender our darkness, our selfishness, our flesh to you, and we ask that you would reveal yourself to us, in the name of Jesus and through the power of your Spirit, Amen.

### **Message**

In Revelation 19, we saw the Word of God cut the flesh from "all people" as He rides a white horse across the face of the earth. This happens at the opening of the seventh seal, the blast of the seventh trumpet, as the seventh bowl of wrath is poured out upon the earth and the voice from the throne in the temple says, "It is done," "It is finished." The Word of God is The Judgment of God who is Jesus and the End of all things.

Revelation 20:1-4

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.*

*Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

That's called the Millennium. <sup>i</sup>

For two thousand years people have wondered, "What and when is that?"  
That sounds fun, what and when is that?"

There have been four primary views... so far: Pre-millennial, Post-millennial, A-millennial, and Dispensational Pre-Millennial.

## The Four Millennial Views

1. Pre-millennialism
2. Post-millennialism
3. A-millennialism
4. Dispensational Pre-millennialism

Some of the early church fathers believed that after the bodily return of Christ, believers who had died would be resurrected to reign with Christ on earth for a thousand years. And then all people would be raised and finally judged. That's called pre-millennialism; Christ returns before the millennium

Postmillennialism is the belief that Christ will return after the Millennium. And that the Millennium will begin through what is often called "the ordinary means of grace." In other words, through the preaching of the Gospel, a time will come when Christ rules the world through His Body the Church.<sup>ii</sup> and after a thousand years, he will return to judge the dead in the final judgment.

Postmillennialism was the dominant view in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It gave rise to abolition, temperance, the great missionary movements of the 19th century, as well as the Great Awakening and Second Great Awakening.<sup>iii</sup>

Amillennialism has been the dominant view of the church for most of history, if not all of history . . . It was the view of most of the early church fathers, Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, the Orthodox Church, and as always, the Roman Catholic Church.

I'm not sure that "Amillennialism" is an accurate name for this bunch...Technically, the word "a-millennial" means "non-millennial," which implies belief in no millennium. But I think most Amillennialists would argue, *"We do believe in the millennium; we think it started the day Christ died and will end on the day he returns; we think the millennium is now, even if it doesn't last a thousand years according to our perception of space and time."*

The fourth view is the dominant view in America today, and yet it is a view that no one had even heard of before the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

It's Dispensational Premillennialism. It's a bit like historic Premillennialism except for the introduction of an idea that changes the character of the whole Bible—that idea is the pre-tribulation rapture.

It's the idea that before Christ returns and inaugurates His millennial reign on earth, God will rapture His faithful Church to Heaven so that she won't experience tribulation.

The idea that Jesus would be telling us, *"In this world you will **NOT** have great tribulation"* is weird enough . . . but what this view does to all of Scripture and our picture of Jesus is weirder still.

The Dispensational scheme means that most of the Revelation and most of the Bible isn't about us, but about Israel, who is not us. Up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, almost every believer taught that the Church didn't replace Israel, but was faithful Israel; the Church taught that the twelve Jewish disciples were like the twelve patriarchs and that together we were all the New Jerusalem coming down. But this new scheme teaches that most of the Revelation isn't about us, but Israel—who is not us.

That's why this crowd got so excited about the creation of the new nation-state named Israel in 1943. There are lots of reasons to get excited about a homeland for a persecuted group of people, but this was their reason:

A nation named Israel & a stone temple are necessary precursors to getting raptured, at which time the antichrist will be revealed and start tribulating folks...

In the "Left Behind" series, he's a Romanian dictator named Nicolai Carpathia, which makes sense, for at the time the books were conceived Nicolai Ceausescu was the evil dictator of Romania.

Romania gets its very name from ancient Rome. And at that time it looked like Romania might join the ten-nation European Confederacy, like the ten horns and ten toes on the beast in the Revelation and in the ancient book of Daniel.

Romania was in the north and connected to the Soviet Union, which clearly represented Gog and Magog that would cross the Euphrates and attack Jerusalem in Israel . . . just before Jesus returned with all of us riding in His train. We would then rule the earth from Old Jerusalem!

Jesus said to the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Well, being some sort of government official in Palestine doesn't sound like paradise to me. If that's the Millennium, I would rather just skip it.

[Image of a descriptive chart of the Millenium Falcon is shown.]

There is a fifth view called the “Millennium Falcon,” but it’s far too complicated to explain right here and now.

So anyway, which view is right? What and when is the Millennium?

This week, I asked myself, “What would it be like, Peter Hiett, for you to reign and rule on the earth?” I pictured a cigar in my mouth, a glass of whiskey in my hand, my toes in the sand, a beautiful woman in a bikini lying next to me, and immediately... I heard this song:

[Sound Clip of part of “Beautiful Girls” by Van Halen]

Now, I'm a seaside sittin', just a smokin' and a drinkin'  
I'm ringside, on top of the world (top of the world)  
I got a drink in my hand I got my toes in the sand  
All I need is a beautiful girl (beautiful girl)  
Here I am, ain't no man of the world, no



[While the song is playing, Peter plays the role.]

All I need is a beautiful girl  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls (I ain't lyin' to you nothin' else I need)  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls sit yourself on down  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls

Now, I'm a seaside sittin', just a smokin' and a drinkin'  
I'm ringside, on top of the world (top of the world)  
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All I need is a beautiful girl  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls (I ain't lyin' to you nothin' else I need)  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls sit yourself on down  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls  
Ah, yeah beautiful girls

If the Millennium is reigning and ruling on the earth, that’s my idea of the Millennium . . . except for maybe one other thing. There have been a lot of people that have hurt me over the years. On my good days, I’d just like an apology, but there’s also something in me that would like to see my enemies suffer.

That’s my idea of the Millennium . . .

I think it’s probably a rather popular idea of the Millennium . . .

It's not too different from the idea in the minds of young male Islamic Jihadists (minus the whiskey and substituting a hookah for the Cuban cigar.) It's not too different from the idea in the minds of most: Jews or Christians.

It's what I wan, but if I got what I want would I want what I got?

King Solomon got it; remember? We studied his book Ecclesiastes all of last year. He ruled and reigned over the nation-state of Israel at its greatest extent . . . He didn't have access to Cuban cigars, but in Ecclesiastes 2, He writes, "*I searched my heart how to cheer my body with wine... I made great works... I had great possessions... I got many concubines, the delight of the sons of Adam*" (Ecc. 2:3-8). Then he writes, over and over, "*Vanity of vanity. All is vanity and striving after the wind.*"

King Solomon was the son of David who conquered his enemies and built the stone temple. Jesus was also the son of David, who conquered his enemies and claimed to build a temple, but He wasn't like Solomon, and so we crucified Him.

Well anyway, what would it mean to, "live and reign with Christ a thousand years?"

Revelation 20:1-3

*Then I saw an angel [angelos: a messenger. That could refer to a spirit, a person, or Jesus] coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key [Jesus already told John, I have the keys of death and hades (1:8)]...to the bottomless pit [abyssos: abyss] and a great chain. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil (diabolos: the false accuser) and Satan (satanas: the adversary), and bound him for a thousand years and threw him into the pit [abyss], and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer...*

That raises an interesting question: "What nations?" and "What longer?" In the last chapter, we saw "the Word of God," cut the flesh from all men—not some—all. That's the end of the nations and Jesus said it would happen on the last day.<sup>iv</sup>

Understand? In verse 1 John wrote, "*then I saw,*" not "*then happened.*" John must be seeing the same events in space and time from several different perspectives.

Well, the messenger seizes the dragon and throws him in the abyss... "*so that he might not deceive the nations any longer until [or achri: unto, as far as] the thousand years were ended, [finished, telesthe... Remember, Jesus is the telos, the end]. After [or meta: literally "with"]<sup>v</sup> that he must be released a little while [chronos: time].*"

It's a crazy sentence "*that he might not still deceive the nations as far as the thousand years were ended.* With this [this binding] *he must be released a small time.*"

In Luke 10, Jesus says that He saw satan fall from Heaven.  
In Colossians Paul argues that he was disarmed at the cross.  
In Hebrews 2:14 we read that Jesus died to destroy (literally “render ineffective,” *katargeo*) him who has the power of death, the devil.”

It would seem that satan is already bound . . .  
And yet, Peter (1 Peter 5:8) writes that satan still prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Paul actually talks about delivering a man—who won’t stop having sex with his mother-in-law—to satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that he might be saved on the Day of the Lord. It’s like satan is bound, but that chain is a leash, and God is using him to save us from ourselves in time.

That may all sound abstract to you, but it’s no longer abstract to me. About twenty years ago I began praying with a woman who was raised in a coven and ritually wed to satan. For seven years we worked through layers of demonic oppression and then this thing showed up that called itself satan. In visions, Jesus also called it satan.

I’m not saying you have to believe, but I think I’m supposed to testify:  
Satan has no power except the power we give him.  
We give him power by believing his lies.  
And all his lies are based on one lie and that is that “God is not salvation,” that God does not love you, or God cannot save you.<sup>vi</sup>

One night, very late, Susan and I were praying for our friend, and in the name of Jesus we had renounced lies, bound satan, and placed him in an iron box... Susan and my friend saw Jesus, in this vision, standing by the box...<sup>vii</sup> In some amazing ways, He answered some questions I had. Susan said to me, “Peter there was a name printed on the inside of this box: The Abyss.”

In the beginning, the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the abyss (*tehowm* in Hebrew, *abyssos* in Greek). God spoke a word, His Word, into the abyss and creation happened.

In 395 A.D. Gregory of Nyssa wrote, “*Christ’s divinity was hidden under His humanity like a fish hook under bait, and Satan, like a ravenous fish, gulped it down.*”

On the cross, darkness swallowed the light of the world; death swallowed life; the liar swallowed the Truth; I am not swallowed I am, and creation happened—Adam was made in the image of God and “It is finished.”

Recently, praying for another friend I said, “Satan, in Jesus’ name I send you to the void” and I heard him say, “I am the void.” I think he might be right on that one. Well, Jesus bound the void, and you have authority over the void. That authority is Christ in you; it’s faith having descended into your void. He is with you there.

*Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed...*<sup>viii</sup>

We just preached two sermons on how the Word we preach is the Judgment of this world. And on Judgment Day, according to Jesus, He will say, *“whatever you did to the least of these you did to me...”* That’s the Judgment.

So, some of you may have been abused, and you thought you were alone. You are not; Jesus has always been with you, even in the abyss, especially in the abyss. You are experiencing His sufferings, and He is giving you faith, which is Himself, so you would rebuke the dragon and he would spit you both out of the abyss and onto the land, just as the whale coughed Jonah up onto the beach.

Revelation 20:4-5

*Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls [psyches] of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus...*

Do you think the souls (the psyches) of martyrs still shape the world after their body is gone? I don’t know if that’s what John sees but like the saying goes, *“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”* John sees the souls of disembodied witnesses (*marturois* in Greek), but not just them, all of us to whom judgment is committed...

*...I saw the souls [psyches] of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands...*

In chapter 13 we discovered that everyone who dwelt on the earth worshiped the beast and was therefore marked.<sup>ix</sup> It seems, that this is all people born of flesh in this fallen world... Well, are there people, born of something else, as if born from above?

*...And those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life [literally, “they lived”] and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life [literally, “did not live.”]*

John is talking as if everyone on earth is dead and only these people “born from above” are truly alive.

*The rest of the dead did not [live] until the thousand years were ended. **This is the first resurrection.***

I love that... it’s as if John knows this is a stretch for the human brain, and so he says, *“Guys this is the first resurrection,”* as if, the folks he’s sending this to would suddenly know what he’s talking about.

He's sending it to the seven churches in Asia Minor, all who had been discipled by Paul when he taught in the Hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus for three years (you can read about that in the book of Acts), and he had sent them several letters, two of which we still have—Colossians and Ephesians.

Now, remember: Paul worked with the Jewish authorities and with Rome to kill Christians. I mean if anybody worshipped the beast it would have been Paul.

In Ephesians 2:5-6 Paul writes, *"...When we were dead in our trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..."*

In Col. 2 and 3 Paul writes that although we were dead, God made us alive *in* Christ, by triumphing over the devil on the cross (where our flesh was cut away).<sup>x</sup> Then he writes, *"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."* (Col. 2:15-16, 3:1)

Paul had taught them and John was teaching them the first resurrection.

In John 5, John records Jesus saying, *"<sup>24</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life..."*

In John 11, Jesus says, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."*

"...Never die!" That means the second death won't hurt them and they have eternal life—*aionios* life. The word *aion* means age, and the word *aionios* means something like *"of the age"* and usually refers to God's age, where life is immortal and imperishable, and undying, but I think you do lose your life and then find it somehow.

*"Eternal life"* refers to *"the life of the age to come."*<sup>xi</sup>

But in the gospel of John, over and over, Jesus talks about having it now, when we believe.

So you see, *"faith, hope, and love"* in us, is not *of* us.

That life is not our life but descends from above.

It's not of our own creation; it's God's creation in us, begotten in us, by Him.

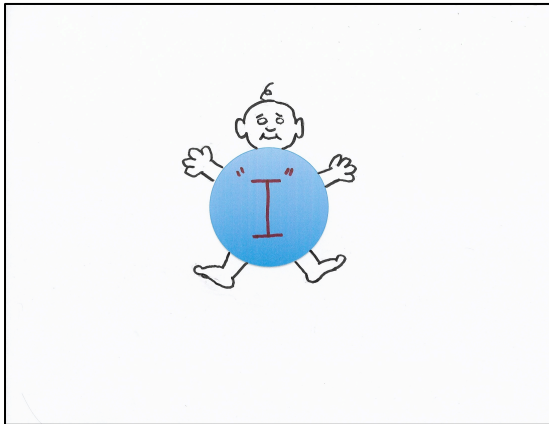
So, in John 3, to Nicodemus the Pharisee, Jesus says, *"Truly truly, you must be begotten from above..."* And when Nicodemus says, "What the heck . . . ?" Jesus says, *"Are you a teacher of Israel and you don't understand these things?"*



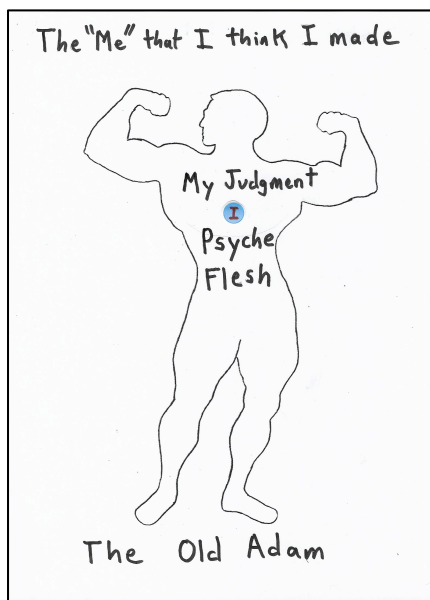
You see, the whole Old Testament reveals that each of us needs a new heart, and a new psyche, and even a new body of spiritual flesh. And that's an operation that none of us can pull off.

In I John 3:14 John writes, <sup>xiii</sup>*"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."* When I don't love it means that I am abiding in death!

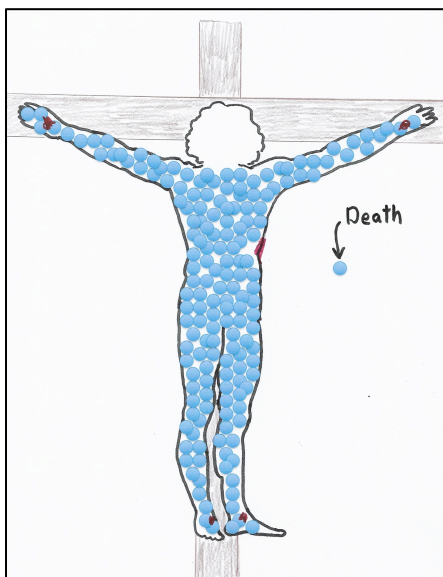
Remember what we've been learning?



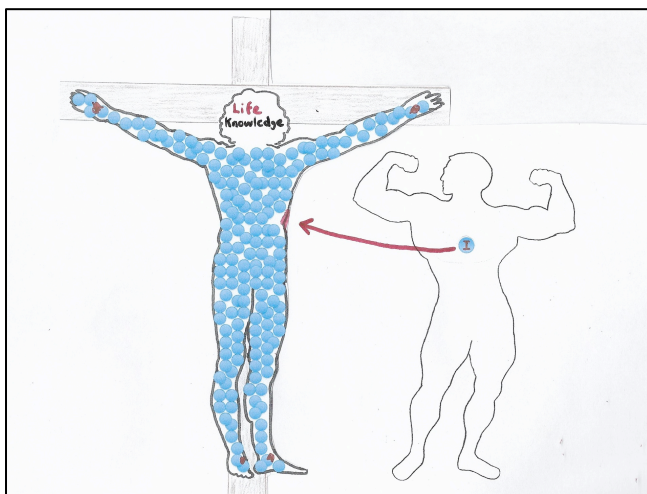
I am the breath of God...



Imprisoned in the "me" that I think I make . . . my old psyche, my ego.  
It is why I am alone, separated from God and my neighbor.



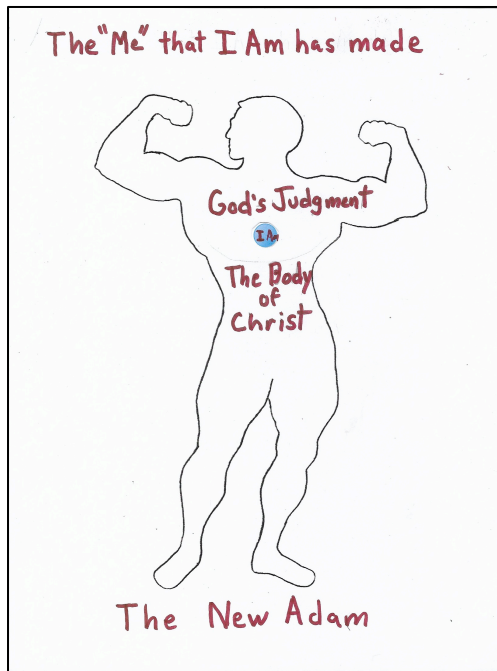
To be alone is death, we died the day we took the life from the tree and called it our own; it's the day we grew an ego and began to hide.



At the cross, God cuts away our flesh; at the cross we "lose our psyche and find it in Christ. We become the Body of Christ.

It's the death of death, the second death, which is the Life.

Life is in Him, and He is the Life in me, flowing through me like blood.



You see? He is God's Judgment in me . . . and expressed as the new "me."  
...But you know, I think maybe He was there all along . . .

This is a profound mystery, but Scripture says that we are His temple . . .  
That means in the inner sanctuary of each soul, within each person, there is a throne . . .  
And maybe the Judgment of God is upon that throne all along . . .  
But hidden behind a drawn curtain . . . for a time.  
But when Christ died that curtain was torn . . . and the Judgment of God began to  
invade your temple . . . from the inside out . . . like a spring of living water.

When He fully saturates your temple, Love will no longer be a law, Love will literally be  
your Life. Love will not be the distant voice of conscience that haunts the depths of your  
soul . . . or constrains you from outside your soul like some commandment in an old  
book. Love will be the desire, and decision, that animates your whole body— all the time.

In other words, God's Will will be your will, and your will will be God's Will.  
In other words, you will will what you want, and want what you will.  
Your will will be entirely free, and you will will creation itself.

You will turn water into wine whenever you'd like a drink.  
You will walk on the sea as if it were boring.  
You will move mountains just because you want to.  
You and Jesus together, on the throne in the sanctuary of your soul, will rule reality itself.

We'll talk more about that later, but Jesus, John, and Paul talk as if we can and are beginning to rule right now. They talk as if we're princes and princesses whose Father is absolute Love and absolute power—princes and princesses who are still in need of discipline, but right now inheriting all things.

Luke 10, Jesus says, *"I saw satan fall... and look I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall harm you..."*

All the disciples were tortured, and imprisoned or murdered . . . and yet Jesus said, *"nothing shall harm you."* You might think that stuff harms you, but all of it—beatings, imprisonment must *help* you, like discipline.

In the Gospel of John Jesus says to His disciples, *"If you ask anything in my name, I will do it..."* Then a little later He says, *"So far—after years—you have asked nothing in my name."*

His name means *"God is Salvation,"* and it's the definition of Love...

I think they were just beginning to learn to love Love . . . and so are we.

Jesus said, *"It's better to give than receive."*

It's as if He enjoyed sacrificial love...

Well, to rule and reign with Jesus is to love like Jesus.

In Revelation 1:5, John wrote, *"Jesus **is** the ruler of the kings on earth..."* and *"**has made** us kings and priests."* (Rev. 1:5-6 ESV and NKJV) John thinks that we are ruling right now . . . And priesting right now . . . (whatever that means?)

Revelation 20:5-10

*... **This is the first resurrection.** Blessed (that means, "happy") and holy (that means "strange") is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*

*"Beloved, do not overlook this one fact,"* writes Peter, and then he quotes the Psalms, *"with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day."* NOT equal to a day, as a day...<sup>xiii</sup>

Verse 7

*...And when<sup>xiv</sup> [literally: whenever] the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison<sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations [ethne: the peoples] that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog,<sup>xv</sup> [we saw all of this in chapter 16] to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. And they marched (not "will march," "did march") up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints (that's us) and the beloved city, (that's also us) but*

*fire came down from heaven and consumed them and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur [theion: divinity, sulfur] where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [literally: “for eons and eons,” “ages and ages”].*

Years ago, praying for our friend, I discovered that calling down the Fire of God, Glory of God, or Love of God all seemed to have the same effect on the evil one; it would burn him. I began to realize that the Fire of God and the Life of love are the same thing. And that thing—who is God—has absolute power over evil...

And yet praying for people in those situations is usually an incredible battle. So I used to really wonder, God why is this so hard? I've come to realize that conquering satan really isn't hard—because he's already been conquered. What's hard is romancing the human heart.

Christ has utter power and authority over the evil one. And yet . . . Christ is *romancing* the human heart—the heart of His Bride. “When I am lifted up I will romance all people to myself.”

Well, this battle is the very same battle that each of us is called to every day. It is believing for ourselves and helping others to believe that God is Love and His Word is salvation, and He loves you absolutely.

Well years ago, early one morning after hours of struggle...  
And after hours of speaking Light into darkness, and Truth into lies...  
After seeing satan go, and while Jesus was talking to my friend in a vision...  
I said to my friend, “Hey ask Jesus this question: Why don't you just throw satan in the lake of fire?”

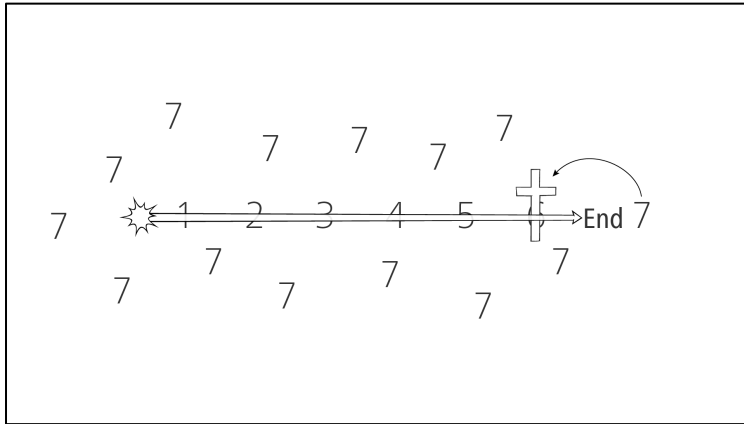
She did: “Jesus why don't you just throw satan in the lake of fire?”  
She was quiet for a moment and then she said, “I just heard him say, ‘I am, all the time.’”

I suddenly realized that by loving our friend, we had been throwing satan into the lake of fire . . . all the time.

That's why Paul tells us to be kind to our enemies, for in so doing we heap burning coals on the head of the enemy. You see? The Fire of Love destroys the real enemy—literally casts satan into the lake of fire—and turns our enemies into friends, and more than friends, the Bride of Christ.

He said, “I am... all the time.” And I think He is.  
Let me remind you of this timeline I've been showing you . . .

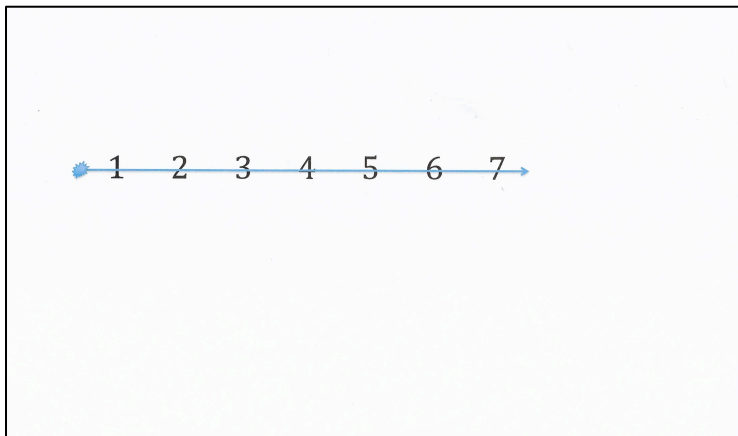
I'm trying to express this biblical idea that was prominent in the early church. It was also prominent in Judaism at the time, and still is in some circles today.<sup>xvi</sup>



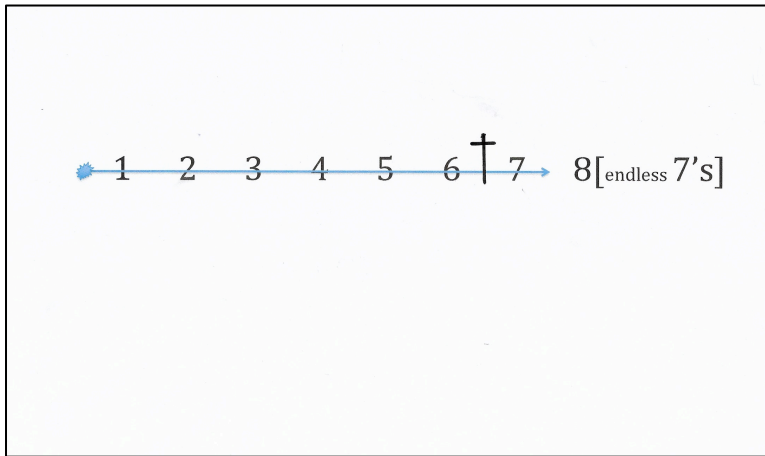
It's the idea that chronological time is represented by these seven days or ages, *aions*. They exist in the reality of God's eternity, God's age, God's Rest.<sup>xvii</sup> All time exists in "I AM" and "I AM" is at rest.

God's Rest is expressed in time each week in the form of our rest on the Sabbath Day—the Seventh Day. It's then that we remember God's Rest, when "It is finished and everything is good."

So every week looks like this:

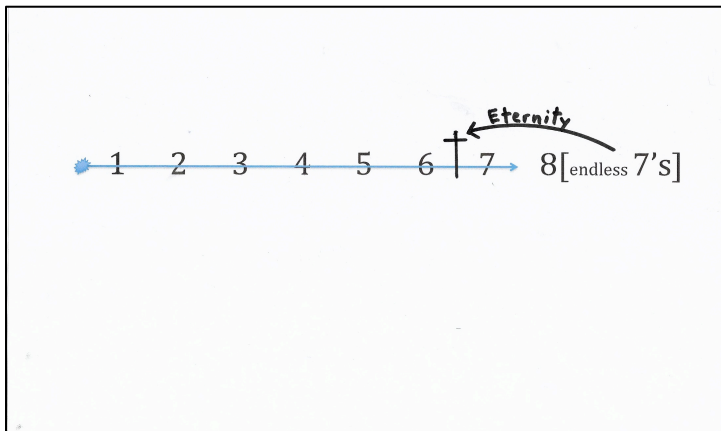


Once a year, the Jews were commanded to observe an eighth day, that was seen as and endless seventh day, that is, an eternal Sabbath...  
Jesus was crucified at the end of the sixth day and rose on the eighth day.

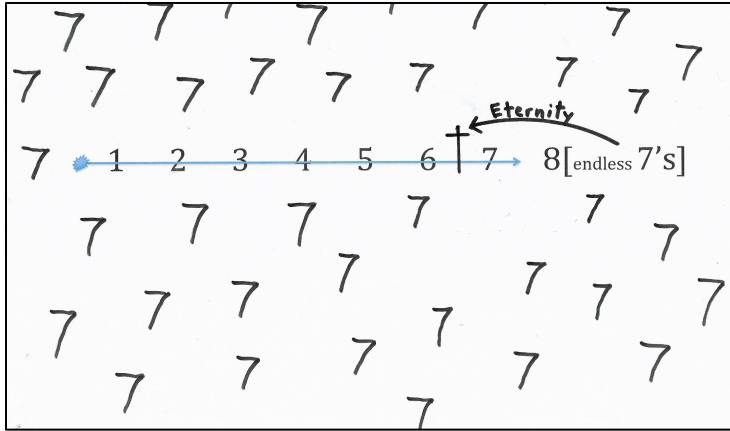


Scripture claims that Christ's sacrifice was the end of the ages, that is, the end of chronological time.<sup>xviii</sup>

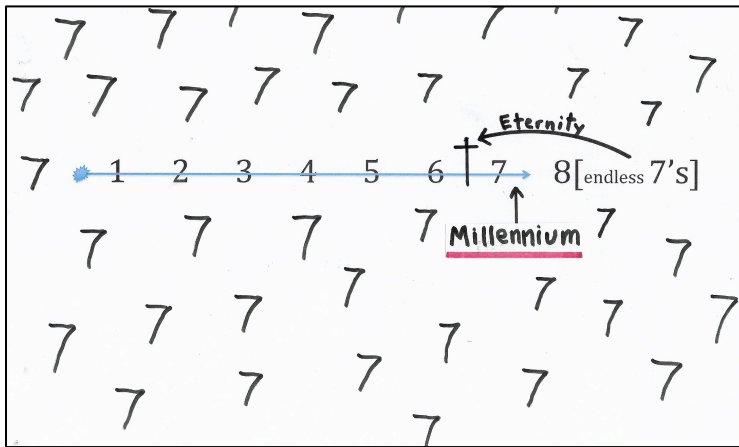
So, at the cross, God's eternity invaded our temporality, and has been invading ever since Good Friday.



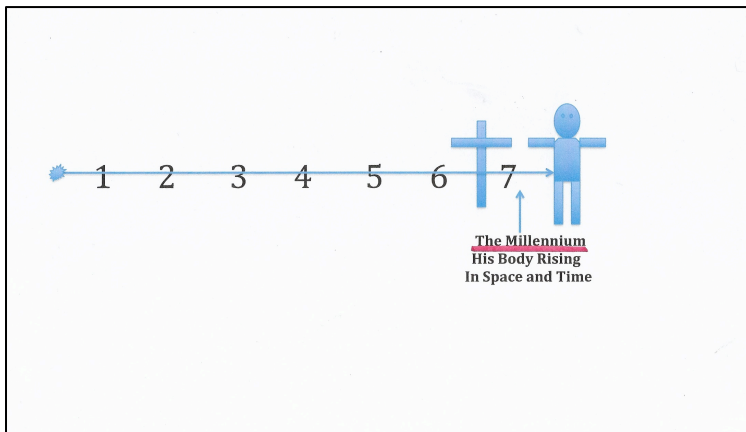
Or maybe people have just become aware of it ever since Good Friday.



Whatever the case, I think the seventh age, which is the seventh millennium, is represented by the Seventh Day in time, when we walk in the finished work of the cross, when we walk in newness of life—eternal life.



It is the age in which Christ's Body is rising in space and time.





We'll need to say more... but do you see? I think that makes me . . . a Pre-Post-A-Millennialist. It means that this *is* the Millennium and Christ is coming . . . *all the time*. Satan is bound and being cast into the Fire . . . *all the time*. And we reign and rule whenever we walk by faith in Love . . . and maybe, even when we don't.

So anyway, "What would it mean to reign and rule" on the earth?

[A brief sound bit of "Beautiful Girls" by Van Halen is played]

Maybe not...well, not quite...

I once read about a man that spoke to an emissary from another kingdom. He asked, "What miracles has your lord worked?" And the emissary replied, "Well there are miracles and there are miracles. In your land, it is regarded as a miracle, if God does someone's will. In our land, it is regarded as a miracle, if someone does the will of God."

You know, if I were to reign and rule on earth, it would mean that either I got God to agree with my will, or God got me to agree with His Will.

If God did my will I think I'd create hell for myself, and maybe already have... like Solomon, I'd moan over and over again, "*Vanity of vanities all is vanity...*"

But if my will became God's Will, if I really willed God's will, this moment... what would change?

Well, I think everything would be just the same: I mean God already does His will. Right? Solomon goes on to say, that God does everything that's anything (Ecc. 3:14-15). Paul writes, "*he accomplishes all things according to his will...*" (Eph. 1:11) "All things." And Scripture reveals that evil is not truly a thing but a nothing... It's a void that God is filling with His Word, who is His Will. And He's even got satan on a leash... to be used for His purpose.

Paul writes, "*If God is for us, who can be against us... in all these things we are hypernikao—super-conquerors—through him who loved us...*" "*He works all things together for good with those who love him and are called according to his purpose...*"

To be saved is to learn that you have always been loved and called according to His purpose, which is to make each of us in His image in order that we might share His joy.

"*These slight momentary afflictions prepare us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all compare,*" writes Paul. So, by faith, at any moment you can surrender all your moments to Jesus, and in that moment know that every moment is exactly as it should be and could not be better than it is, right now.<sup>xix</sup>

If this moment, I willed what God wills, absolutely nothing would change, except me; I'd be happy. I'd know that I am infinitely loved and so I'd long to love, and so I *would* love, but instantly I'd be insanely happy.

And then, do you see that God's will would actually be my will, and I would will all things in absolute freedom. God and I would rule the universe from the throne in the sanctuary of my soul.

Well, has any man ever constantly willed God's Will? ...Yes! Absolutely! He changed water to wine, walked on the sea, moved mountains, and did all sorts of miracles . . .

But He didn't hate those that hated Him . . . In fact, He let them torture Him and nail Him to a tree; that's how He conquered His enemies and that's the greatest miracle—the day He did no miracle. It's not the day God did man's will, but the day a Man did God's Will. He didn't hate His enemies... He died for His enemies, for He believed that His enemies were His Bride; it's how He gets the girls: [Peter sings] "*Oh yeah beautiful girls...*"

In the next chapter, a New Jerusalem descends from Heaven adorned as a bride, and He is romancing you right now. You are that beautiful Bride.

You are His Bride, His Body, His Temple.

And when you trust in Him, you experience the blessings of the Millennium; you begin to reign over all creation as a king, and you begin to love like the high priest . . . Actually, you are the Body of the High Priest who offered Himself for *all*.

In 1990, about the time Tim Lahaye and Jerry Jenkins must've started working on "Left Behind," I was sent on a trip to Romania to train newly liberated pastors how to "do church..." and they trained me how to be a Christian.

For forty-five years, under Nicolai Ceausescu, Christianity had been illegal.

Some of the pastors I met had scars on their bodies from attempts made on their life; some had friends and family that had been murdered for their faith . . .

But only ten months earlier, they had toppled the government of Romania, just as Telemachus toppled Rome by announcing—proclaiming—the Word.<sup>xx</sup>

I told you the story of how they gathered around the house of one persecuted pastor a few weeks before Christmas, and literally wouldn't stop singing until thousands had been gunned down by the secret police in the central square, and the dictator was deposed by the people—people who wouldn't stop singing about Jesus.

I think it's the greatest revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, because of the revolution in the hearts of the people, particularly a few people—people that looked just like Jesus.

One of them was my friend Cornell. I haven't talked to him in years, but I met him. He took me all around his city, and everywhere we went, he was just genuinely happy. He seemed to love everyone, knowing that he was thoroughly loved.

One night, we ate dinner at his house. After supper, he pulled a box down from a shelf in the living room. The box was like a shrine filled with pictures of his wife. His face glowed as he spoke of her. You could make out her features in the face of Cornell's six-year-old daughter, who came in to say goodnight.

A few years earlier, Cornell's wife had been diagnosed with cancer. He prayed fervently for a miracle, and he read medical books trying to find a cure. Finally, through Christians in Great Britain, a bone marrow transplant was arranged and paid for. All they needed was an exit visa.

The authorities told Cornell, *"We will grant the Visa, but only if you renounce your faith and inform on the other pastors in your underground church."* Cornell told me how he struggled; he'd been spied on, persecuted, interrogated, even radiated. He lived in a house where the secret police had electrocuted the former pastor by putting power lines onto the drain pipes.

Well, Cornell and his wife decided what to do. He said, "Brother Peter it was the hardest day of my life." That was the day, shortly after the revolution, when he held his thirty-year-old wife in his arms as she slowly passed from this world, leaving Cornell and their daughter behind—"left behind."

When he told the story to my friend Steve, as Cornell showed Steve the box of pictures, Steve started to cry. Cornell looked at Steve with great compassion and said, "Brother Steve, don't cry. It is a privilege to suffer for Jesus!"

Cornell will get his bride back and all things with her... He will inherit all things, but for now, he's ruling and reigning in the Millennium.

This *is* the Millennium. Don't miss it.

### **Communion**

He took the bread and broke saying this is my body, which is given to you; take and eat. And He took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood and in my Bride; drink of it all of you."

You see?

This is the Judgment of God

This is the will of God; in *this* is Love... Have faith in Love you begin to rule and reign.

When this Will becomes your will, you will rule and reign...<sup>xxi</sup>

And you will be happy and wonderfully strange.

This world will no longer shape you and Christ in you will transform the world.

In Jesus' name believe the Gospel.

### **Prayer**

... Come Holy Spirit, Faith, Hope, and Love rise in your temple, occupy your temple, and be glorified in us, in Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Benediction**

John sends the Revelation to these seven little churches. They're occupied, they think they are about to be utterly crushed, some are dying, some think they're doing relatively well—they think—but they're rich and they're dead. Some, their love has grown weak. He sends a letter to all of these.

What's the point of the letter to these haggard, weak Christians? I think this is the point: (you don't think it's true, but it is true) you reign and you rule. And now, from two-thousand years later, we can look back and say, "I my gosh! It's true! Not just in some age by and by that we can't access now, but right in history. Study history! Those people are the reason you are here this morning. They change the world.

Paul said there is an "immeasurable greatness of power in those who believe." If you've ever experienced a miracle...you know God has all power... I think there is a power that He [God] wants to show us. It's a power that is greater than any other power because it's Himself. That is the power to love in freedom. That means that it is your desire no matter whether this entire world turns against you. It means you keep loving because you love Love. That's what happened on the cross...and that power is the power of romance; it's how He gets the girl, which is us. So, may you believe the Gospel and love in freedom. That's the doorway to being eternally happy and strange.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio or video version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*

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<sup>i</sup> Mille is *latin* for the Greek *chilio*, which means "thousand." Thousand is the largest numeric denomination in Scripture in both Greek and Hebrew—so even if your English Bible has the word

<sup>ii</sup> This will be a time when the whole world prospers due to the faithful rule of the Church. And after that thousand-year period of prosperity, and perhaps a short period of rebellion, Christ will return in His resurrection body for the final judgment.

<sup>iii</sup> Both Charles Finney and the Puritan Jonathan Edwards were avid Postmillennialists. But over time much of Postmillennialism devolved into optimistic Liberalism, the belief in utopia by human energy.

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<sup>iv</sup> *"The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day"* (John 12:48).

<sup>v</sup> *Meta* is translated as "with" 345 times in the KJV and as "after" 88 times in the KJV.

<sup>vi</sup> If he were to manifest outright, in this room, there'd be no reason to fear...  
But renouncing his lies takes a lifetime of growing in faith...  
When you refuse to love yourself, forgive yourself, and accept your sorry self—you put flesh on the evil one. He is disarmed, but with fear and un-forgiveness we give him arms, even our own. Arms.

<sup>vii</sup> And he even answered questions after it was over.

<sup>viii</sup> Jesus said, "You who follow me will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel." We even learn that we are to judge the angels (1 Cor. 6:3).

<sup>ix</sup> That would certainly include men like Saul of Tarsus employed by religious authorities in service to Rome and sent out to persecute Christians... Wouldn't it also include Peter who denied Jesus in fear of the beast?

<sup>x</sup> *"...And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.... If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."* (Col. 2:13-16, 3:1)

<sup>xi</sup> The biblical writers thought of these ages (these *aions* in chronological time) and an age to come (that which is *aionios*, of the age, eternal). But the age things—in the age to come—were not like things of this current age. In 1 Cor. 15 Paul speaks of getting bodies in the age to come—bodies that are not temporal and perishing, but immortal and imperishable. They are bodies of the coming age, in that age, according to Jesus (Mark 10:30) we will have *aionios* life, that's life of the age to come, eternal life.

<sup>xii</sup> Eternal life is now. We're surrounded by it, like the fish in the ocean, but we have no notion about it at all. - Anthony De Mello, *Awareness* (New York, NY: Image Books, Doubleday, 1990), p. 137

<sup>xiii</sup> In chapter 13 John points out a "human number" and invites us to calculate and we did. It implies that the other numbers aren't merely human, but 1000 is the number which is expressly pointed out as not merely human by Scripture—a number we can't simply calculate.

<sup>xiv</sup> (*hote* is the normal word for when, *hotan* means something like "when if" that is "whenever.")

<sup>xv</sup> This is a group mentioned in Ezekiel that, along with all nations and people, turns into the sacrificial feast we read about in the last chapter. It's the same crowd that goes to war with God and nails Jesus to the tree at the end of the sixth bowl and beginning of the seventh.

<sup>xvi</sup> Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, "He finished in six days." This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, "Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years." Therefore, my children, in six

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days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. "And He rested on the seventh day... Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead. And when He had manifested Himself, He ascended into the heavens. -Epistle of Barnabbas ~ 70-130 AD

<sup>xvii</sup> Time does not exist, Barth concludes, apart from eternity's embrace. Eternity embraces time on all sides, preceding, accompanying, and fulfilling it. To say that God is eternal means that God is "the One who is and rules before time, in time, and again after time, the One who is not conditioned by time, but conditions it absolutely in his freedom" (II/1, p. 619). . . . God's eternity is so to speak the companion of time, or rather it is itself accompanied by time in such a way that in this occurrence time acquires its hidden center, and therefore both backwards and forwards its significance, its content, its source and its goal, but also continually its significant present. Because, in this occurrence, eternity assumes the form of a temporal present, all time, without ceasing to be time, is no more empty time, or without eternity. It has become new. This means that in and with this present, eternity creates in time real past and real future, distinguishes between them, and is itself the bridge and way from the one to the other. Jesus Christ is the way." (II/1, p. 627)

The real future that eternity creates in time is the future of eternal life in communion with God. The real past, in turn, is the past of sin and death as abolished in the cross of Christ. This old reality of sin and death is "continually opposed" by the new reality of eternal life, even as the new reality "comes breaking in triumphantly" again and again (II/1, p. 628). Jesus Christ stands between the old reality and the new. "In him the equilibrium between them has been upset and ended. He is the way from the one to the other and the way is irreversible. He is the turning" (II/1, p. 628).

—George Hunsinger, Disruptive Grace, p. 205, 207

<sup>xviii</sup> [Rev. 10:6 "*Chronos will be no more*"]

<sup>xix</sup> You must utterly believe that the circumstances of your life, that is, every minute of your life, as well as the whole course of your life—anything, yes, everything that happens—have all come to you by His will and by His permission. You must utterly believe that everything that has happened to you is from God and is exactly what you need. . . .

—Jeanne Guyon, Experiencing the Depths of Jesus, p. 32

<sup>xx</sup> But as long as this world lasts and Christ's Church is in it, it is to be a militant Church. Although it has the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, woe to the Christian Church when it is triumphant in this world, for then it is not the Church that has triumphed but the world. . . . Did he not come into the world in order to suffer; is not that what he called being triumphant?—Søren Kierkegaard

<sup>xxi</sup> Remember this is God's original job description for Adam; we are the body of the *Eschatos* Adam.