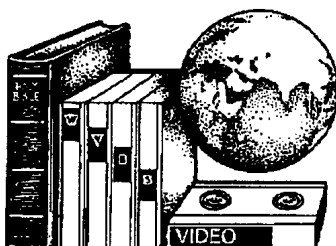


# World Video Bible School®

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## MILLENNIAL MANIA



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# **THE MILLENNIAL MANIA**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Chapter I - The Millennial Mania (1). . . . .	1
Chapter II - The Millennial Mania (2). . . . .	9
Chapter III - Has the Kingdom Come?. . . . .	17
Chapter IV - Is Jesus Coming Soon?. . . . .	25
Chapter V - Palestine in the Premillennial Plan. . . . .	31
Chapter VI - Misconceptions of Matthew 24 (1). . . . .	39
Chapter VII - Misconceptions of Matthew 24 (2).. . . .	45
Chapter VIII - Have You Really Read Revelation?.. . . .	55
Chapter IX - Will Rome Be Revived Before Christ Comes?.. . . .	61
Chapter X - Are You Afraid of the Antichrist?.. . . .	69
Chapter XI - Are You Ready for the Rapture?.. . . .	77
Chapter XII - Are You Troubled by the Tribulation?. . . . .	83
Chapter XIII - Are You Anxious About Armageddon?.. . . .	91
Chapter XIV - What is the Meaning of the Millennium?. . . . .	97
Chapter XV - Christ is Coming!.. . . .	105
Sources . . . . .	111



## LESSON I:

### THE MILLENNIAL MANIA (1)

#### Introduction:

1. “Millennial” comes from two Latin words:
  - a. “Mille” meaning “thousand.”
  - b. “Annum” meaning “year.”
2. “Mania” is “an exaggerated or irrational craving; an infatuation or madness.”
3. There is a millennial mania in the religious world today!
4. Premillennial preachers on radio and television fill the airwaves with predictions that the return of the Lord to rule on earth for 1,000 literal years ( the millennium) is rapidly approaching!
5. Premillennial books with dramatic titles abound in bookstores.
  - a. The Late Great Planet Earth by Hal Lindsey.
  - b. Shockwaves of Armageddon by Doug Clark.
  - c. The End of the Age by Pat Robertson.
  - d. 2001-On the Edge of Eternity by Jack Van Impe.
6. Books, tracts, sermons and lectures contain warnings which fill us with fear:
  - a. “Times are getting worse and worse!”
  - b. “Events in the Middle East are leading to Armageddon!”
  - d. “The European Common Market is preparing the way for the Antichrist.”
  - e. Even El Nino is said to be a sign that the end is near.
7. Truly, we are in the midst of millennial madness!
  - a. Many sincere Bible believers are troubled and frightened.
  - b. Others are confused, not knowing what to believe.

8. Does the Bible really teach all the things premillennialists are telling us, or are we being deceived by misguided souls and false teachers (1 John 4:1; Revelation 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21)?

## Discussion:

### I. WHAT IS PREMILLENNIALISM?

- A. There are three common views of the millennium in Revelation 20:1-6.
1. Premillennialism: This is the belief that Christ will return in order to set up a kingdom on this earth and rule over it from Jerusalem for 1,000 literal years.
  2. Postmillennialism: This is the belief things are getting better and better as a result of the preaching of the gospel. This will eventuate in an age of peace and prosperity on the earth ( the millennium). The second coming of Christ will occur at the end of the millennium.
  3. Amillennialism: This is the belief that the thousand years are figurative and probably represent a period of time when Christians are generally free to spread the gospel throughout the world.
- B. The premillennial position is the most popular view of the millennium in our time.
- C. According to premillennialism, several things must take place **before** Christ can come back.
1. There will be numerous wars, earthquakes, famines, floods and other disasters of a severity not seen before.
  2. The old Roman Empire will be revived in Europe.
  3. A great evil world ruler will arise - the Antichrist!
  4. The Jews will return to Palestine where many will be converted to Christianity; the temple will be rebuilt and the Old Testament sacrificial system will be restored.
  5. True believers will be secretly and suddenly “caught up” into heaven - “the Rapture.”
  6. A time of intense persecution will take place against those who are being converted on earth - “the Great Tribulation.”

7. A great battle will be fought at Megiddo in Palestine between the Antichrist and his army, and the “kings of the East” and their armies - “Armageddon.”
- D. Also according to premillennialists, several things will take place **after** Christ comes back.
1. Christ will come at a crucial time and determine the outcome of the Battle of Armageddon.
  2. He will then rule the earth from David’s throne in Jerusalem for 1,000 actual years - the millennium.
    - a. Peace will prevail throughout the world.
    - b. Paradise will be restored.
    - c. People will live extremely long lives.
  3. At the end of the millennium, Satan will be released from prison.
    - a. He will lead a rebellion against the Lord and His righteous rule.
    - b. Satan will be soundly defeated.
    - c. The “Great White Throne” Judgment will take place.
    - d. Eternity will follow as the righteous are made immortal and are given a new heaven and a new earth.
  4. This is the most common premillennial approach, but the number and sequence of events may vary from person to person and from group to group.

## **II. PREMILLENNIALISM HAS TROUBLED GOD’S PEOPLE SINCE ANCIENT TIMES.**

- A. Millennial ideas were held by some of the Jews as early as the second century before Christ.
- B. In the second and third centuries after Christ, some believers were confused by chiliasm (premillennialism).
  1. It was widely rejected by the church in the East.

2. In the West, Augustine's opposition gradually killed it.
- C. In the Protestant Reformation the great leaders such as Luther and Calvin were amillennial in their thinking.
- D. Daniel Whitby (1638 - 1726) made postmillennialism popular among Protestants.

### III. A FORM OF PREMILLENNIALISM CALLED DISPENSATIONALISM BECAME POPULAR IN THE 1800'S.

- A. Dispensationalism teaches that all human history can be divided into seven successive ages which correspond to the six days of creation which concluded with God resting on the seventh day.
  1. The first day = the age of **innocence** which lasted from creation to the fall.
  2. The second day = the age of **conscience** which lasted from the fall to the flood.
  3. The third day = the age of **human government** which lasted from the flood to the time of Abraham.
  4. The fourth day = the age of **promise** which lasted from Abraham to the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai.
  5. The fifth day = the age of **law** which lasted from Sinai to Calvary.
  6. The sixth day = the age of **grace** which will last from Calvary to the coming of Christ to establish His kingdom on earth.
  7. The seventh day = the age of the **kingdom**, which lasts from the second coming of Christ to the end of the millennium when eternity will begin.
- B. Two things are wrong with the dispensational division of the earth's history:
  1. The idea that one day equals a thousand years is based on an erroneous interpretation of 2 Peter 3:8.
    - a. Peter did **not** say, " A thousand years **is** a day."



- b. He said, "A thousand years is **as** a day."
  - 2. The dispensational divisions are purely arbitrary; they do not set forth the doctrine; they appear to have been selected to set forth the doctrine already believed (2 Peter 3:16).
- C. Two prominent preachers are primarily responsible for the form of dispensational doctrine believed today:
  - 1. John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) ,one of the founders of the Plymouth Brethren, is the father of modern dispensationalism.
  - 2. C. I. Scofield, a lawyer and politician turned minister for the Congregational Church, popularized dispensationalism with two works:
    - a. Rightly Dividing the World of Truth - first published in 1888.
    - b. The Scofield Reference Bible - first published in 1909.

#### **IV. THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER PROMINENT POINTS OF PREMILLENNIALISM.**

- A. It is alleged that God did not fulfill all the land promise to Israel.
  - 1. All of Palestine must be occupied before the kingdom can be set up.
  - 2. This will be discussed and refuted fully in a later lesson.
- B. It is alleged that Christ came the first time to set up His kingdom, but failed to do so because of the rejection of the Jews.
  - 1. Instead, He set up the church as a "spiritual contingency" or "vestibule of the kingdom."
  - 2. Christ is coming the next time to set up His earthly kingdom.
  - 3. Several things are wrong with this theory:
    - a. It makes the first coming of Christ a failure.
    - b. It casts reflection upon the omnipotence of God suggesting He was unable to do that which He intended.

- c. It also casts reflection upon the omniscience of God and suggests He did not know the right time to send His Son (Galatians 4:4,5).
  - d. It makes the church of Christ a mere “afterthought” (Ephesians 3:10,11).
- C. It makes Revelation 20 the focal point around which all of the rest of the Bible is to be interpreted; this will be shown to be false in a later lesson.

### **Conclusion:**

1. The majority of conservative believers in the inspiration of the Bible today hold to some form of premillennialism.
2. Dispensationalism is the most popular form of premillennialism in our time.
3. Dispensationalism differs from classic premillennialism on several points:
  - a. Classic premillennialism does not necessarily require belief that the days of creation represent ages or dispensations.
  - b. Classic premillennialism believes the church was a part of God’s original purpose, but also holds to a belief in a future millennial reign on earth.
  - c. Classic premillennialism does not make the first coming of Christ a failure or the church an afterthought, and therefore does not reflect upon the omnipotence and omniscience of God.
4. In later lessons, we will examine each pertinent point of premillennialism in the light of the inspired Scriptures.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What does “millennial” mean?
2. What is premillennialism?
3. What is postmillennialism?
4. What is amillennialism?
5. Which one of the three above views is the most popular one today?

6. What are some of the things which must happen before Christ comes again, according to premillennialists?
7. What are some of the things which will follow the return of Christ according to premillennialists?
8. What is chiliasm?
9. Whose opposition killed chiliasm for centuries?
10. Was Martin Luther a premillennialist?
11. Was John Calvin a premillennialist, postmillennialist or amillennialist?
12. Who influenced Protestants to believe in postmillennialism for many years?
13. Who is the father of modern day dispensationalism?
14. Whose reference Bible has done much to spread dispensationalism?
15. How do dispensationalists arrive at seven ages or dispensations?
16. How does classic premillennialism differ from dispensationalism?
17. What does dispensational doctrine teach about the place of the church in God's plan?
18. What do premillennialists believe about the land of Palestine in God's plan?
19. Who will fight in the Battle of Armageddon?
20. What is the Rapture?
21. From where will Jesus rule during the millennium, according to premillennialists?
22. What are some of the popular premillennial books on the newsstands today?
23. What are some of the frightening predictions made by premillennial preachers?
24. What part will the Jews play in God's plan according to premillennialists?
25. Who wrote The Late Great Planet Earth?
26. Does 2 Peter 3:8 teach that a day is a thousand years with God?



## LESSON II:

### THE MILLENNIAL MANIA (2)

#### Introduction:

1. There is “millennial mania” in the religious world today as many well known preachers predict that the return of the Lord is at hand!
2. Some of the prominent preachers contributing to this mania include:
  - a. Billy Graham
  - b. Hal Lindsey
  - c. Pat Robertson
  - d. Adrian Rogers
  - e. Jimmy Swaggart
3. Millennial madness is not a new phenomenon:
  - a. It has occurred periodically in history.
  - b. It has even invaded the Lord’s church at times.

#### Discussion:

- I. **THE NINETEENTH CENTURY WAS A TIME OF GREAT MILLENNIAL EXPECTATION IN AMERICA.**
  - A. The Millerite Movement resulted in the beginning of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.
    1. William Miller (1782-1849), a farmer in Vermont, was converted to the Baptist Church and became a “lay” preacher.
    2. He studied the Bible diligently, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation.
    3. Miller made two major mistakes in his study of Bible prophecy:
      - a. He decided that a day must **always** represent a year (cf. Numbers 14:34).

- b. He followed the chronology of Bishop Ussher; this chronology is now believed by many conservative Bible scholars to be wrong in places.
- 4. In 1818, Miller concluded that the 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14 “till the sanctuary be cleansed” was the time from Nehemiah’s rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem in 457 BC to the second coming of Christ.

$$\begin{array}{r} 2300 \\ -457 \\ \hline 1843 \end{array}$$

- 5. Miller wrote: “I was thus brought,...at the close of my two year study of the Scriptures, to the solemn conclusion that in about twenty-five years from that time (1818) all the affairs of our present state would be wound up” (Sidney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, p. 479).
- 6. The preaching of Miller’s views throughout the nation created great excitement as tens of thousands began preparing for the Lord’s return in March, 1843.
  - a. When this prediction failed, Miller set the date at March, 1844.
  - b. When this prophecy also proved false, Mr. Miller set the date for the Lord’s return at October 22, 1844.
  - c. Once again, multitudes who had sold their homes and businesses, given away their possessions and quit their jobs, were disappointed, disillusioned and disgusted.
  - d. **How foolish and futile it is for mere men to claim knowledge of that which neither the angels nor Christ in His earthly sojourn knew** (Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32)!!!
- 7. James White, one of Miller’s disciples, and his wife Ellen, organized many of the disgruntled Millerites into what became the Seventh Day Adventist Church.
- 8. Today, the Seventh Day Adventists are among the most ardent millennialists in the religious world!
- B. The Millennial Dawn Movement grew into the cult known as “Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

1. Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), a successful businessman of Allegheny, Pennsylvania, was converted to Adventism and began preaching.
2. Russell predicted the millennium had dawned and began publishing a paper called "The Herald of the Morning."
3. In 1879, he began a paper called "Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence."
4. Russell taught the second coming had occurred in 1874 and the end of all things would take place in 1914.
5. He died in 1916 and J. F. "Judge" Rutherford replaced him as head of the Watchtower Movement.
6. In 1920, Rutherford published a famous book entitled Millions Now Living Will Never Die in which he taught that "...the great jubilee cycle is due to begin in 1925. At that time the earthly phase of the kingdom shall be recognized....1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the faithful of old."
7. The latest in a long series of dates set by the "Jehovah's Witness" organization for the "conclusion of the present system of things" was 1975.
  - a. In the book Everlasting Life in Freedom of the Sons of God in 1966, it was suggested that 1975 could be the beginning of the millennium (cf. also "How Much Longer Will It Be?" in Awake, Oct. 8, 1966).
  - b. Many of the members quit their jobs, sold their businesses and homes and gave full time to "witnessing" as 1975 approached.
  - c. They, like earlier victims of millennial predictions, had their hopes dashed to the ground and thousands left the group (Raymond Franz, Crisis of Conscience, p. 206).
  - d. An article appeared in the March 15, 1980 "Watchtower" acknowledging their error.
8. Moses said: "And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' - when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass,

that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:21,22).

9. **All those who have set dates for the Lord's return have been proven to be false prophets!**

## **II. FUNDAMENTALISM FEATURES DISPENSATIONALISM.**

- A. When modernism and liberalism captured the leadership of many of America's denominations in the late 1800's and early 1900's, conservatives regrouped in what became known as the "fundamentalist movement."
  1. The name of the movement came from a series of 12 volumes published from 1910 to 1913 which stressed the "fundamentals of the faith."
  2. Many of the writers were premillennialists and therefore this doctrine was taught in every volume.
  3. Among many conservative groups, dispensational views came to be equated with a belief in the literal second coming of Christ; if one did not accept dispensationalism, then he was accused of denying the Lord's return.
- B. Premillennialism has even been a problem in the churches of Christ.
  1. Most of the early preachers of the Restoration Movement were postmillennialists; this is the reason Alexander Campbell named his paper "The Millennial Harbinger."
  2. A few early preachers held to classic premillennialism.
    - a. Walter Scott flirted with premillennialism for a time, but later returned to the postmillennial view he had held earlier.
    - b. Moses Lard, Robert Milligan and T. W. Brents also were classic premillennialists.
    - c. Remember: classic premillennialism does not make the church an afterthought or the plan of God a failure as does dispensationalism.



- d. These men did not press their premillennial views to the dividing of the church as did others later.
- 3. John Thomas (1805-1871), a physician from England, who was baptized by Walter Scott, was a premillennialist.
  - a. Thomas also denied that man had a soul.
  - b. He taught the second coming and the resurrection would take place in 1866.
  - c. He returned to England and formed the sect known as "Christ-adelphians."
- 4. A form of premillennialism invaded some of the churches in Texas between 1890 and 1910.
  - a. W. L. Gibbs published a paper called "Word and Work" in which he advocated soul sleeping, a second chance after death, hell is not eternal punishment but annihilation, and the personal reign of Christ on this earth for 1,000 literal years.
  - b. After Gibb's death, A. S. Bradley became the leader of the movement, which came to be known as "Bradleyism."
  - c. A debate between Bradley and C. R. Nichol in 1906 brought about the demise of Bradleyism.

### **III. THE GREATEST PREMILLENNIAL THREAT TO THE LORD'S CHURCH WAS LED BY R. H. BOLL.**

- A. Robert Henry Boll (1875-1956) came to the USA from Germany when he was 14 years old.
  - 1. He heard and obeyed the gospel while working as a farm laborer in Middle Tennessee.
  - 2. He worked his way through the Nashville Bible School where he studied at the feet of David Lipscomb and James A. Harding.
  - 3. Boll became the front page editor for the Gospel Advocate in 1910 and served until he was removed in 1915 because of his speculative writing on prophecy.

4. He later moved to Louisville, Kentucky where he edited a paper called Word and Work.
  5. Boll was a dispensationalist and used his paper to spread this view among the churches of Christ.
  6. H. Leo Boles conducted a written debate with Boll on the subject.
- B. More than any other, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. was responsible for defeating dispensationalism in the church.
1. Wallace debated Charles M. Neal in Winchester, Kentucky January 2-6, 1933; a second debate was held with Neal in Chattanooga, Tennessee in June of the same year.
  2. Wallace used the Gospel Advocate, which he edited from 1930 to 1934, to wage an unrelenting war on premillennialism.
  3. In 1945, Wallace exposed premillennialism in a series of meetings in the Music Hall in Houston, Texas.
    - a. The sermons presented in the meeting were later printed in a book entitled God's Prophetic Word.
    - b. This is probably the most devastating and thorough refutation of all forms of millennial error in print!
  4. Today, only 81 congregations of the more than 13,000 in the USA hold to premillennial teaching and they are located mainly in Kentucky, Indiana and Louisiana; their fellowship is largely with the Independent Christian Church and other denominational bodies which espouse premillennialism.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Millennial mania is not new; it comes and goes periodically.
2. Premillennialism poses a serious threat to the Lord's church for it separates the church and the kingdom, makes the first coming of Christ an ill-timed failure, and seeks to reinstate the old Jewish sacrificial system, which was done away at the cross (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12).
3. Premillennialism also makes the kingdom of Christ a kingdom of this world, the very kind of kingdom the Jews sought, and our Lord denied He came to establish (John 18:36).

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Who are some of the prominent premillennial preachers today?
2. Has premillennialism ever tried to invade the Lord's church?
3. How did William Miller arrive at the date for the second coming of Christ?
4. Who organized many of Miller's followers into the Seventh Day Adventist Church?
5. Who founded the Jehovah's Witnesses?
6. What were two of the dates for the Lord's return that Russell predicted?
7. Who predicted that "Millions now living will never die?"
8. What was the latest date set by Jehovah's Witnesses for "the end of this present system of things?"
9. Was Alexander Campbell a premillennialist?
10. Were any of the pioneers in the Restoration Movement premillennialists? If so, were they classic premillennialists or dispensationalists? Did they divide the church over their views?
11. Who founded the Christadelphians?
12. Who led the premillennial effort to infiltrate churches of Christ in this century?
13. Who, more than any other, was responsible for stopping this movement?



## **LESSON III:**

### **HAS THE KINGDOM COME?**

#### **Introduction:**

1. That God planned to establish a kingdom on this earth is admitted by all who believe the Bible.
2. However, the time of the establishment and the nature of the kingdom are both subjects of controversy.
  - a. Has the kingdom already come, or is it still to be established as premillennialists affirm?
  - b. Is the kingdom spiritual in nature and identical with the church, or will it be a material, physical, worldly kingdom established and maintained by carnal weapons as premillennialists teach?
3. These questions can only be answered satisfactorily by the Word of God (Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 3:16,17).

#### **Discussion:**

##### **I. THE KINGDOM WAS PROMISED TO GREAT MEN OF OLD.**

- A. God promised Abraham his “seed” would bless all the earth (Genesis 12:3; 17:1-14).
  1. Abraham was the father of the chosen nation through which Christ came (Matthew 1:1-17).
  2. The land of Palestine was given to Abraham’s descendants as their homeland (Genesis 12:1,2; 13:14-17).
  3. Christ is the Seed of Abraham who blessed all nations by dying for their sins (Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16, 26-29).
- B. God promised through Jacob that a ruler (Christ) would come from Judah (Genesis 49:10).
- C. Moses promised that God would raise up a Prophet like himself (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22,23).

- D. God also promised David He would raise up his seed to sit on his throne (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Luke 1:32,33; Acts 2:29-36).

## **II. THE KINGDOM WAS PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.**

- A. Joel foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-21).
  - 1. God would pour out His Spirit (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16).
  - 2. It would happen in “the last days” or “afterward” (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16,17).
  - 3. Whoever “called upon the name of the Lord would be saved” (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21, 36-41).
  - 4. It would take place in Jerusalem (Joel 2:32; Acts 1:4; 2:14).
- B. Isaiah foretold the building of the Lord’s house (Isaiah 2:1-4).
  - 1. It would happen in “the last days” (Isaiah 2:2; Acts 2:16,17).
  - 2. The Lord’s house would be built (Isaiah 2:2; Acts 2:47; 1 Timothy 3:15).
  - 3. All nations would come into it (Isaiah 2:2; Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:5).
  - 4. The word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3; Acts 1:4; 2:14; 8:4,5).
- C. Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the coming of the kingdom (Daniel 2:31-45).
  - 1. Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image (statue) in his dream.
    - a. Its head was of gold.
    - b. Its chest and arms were of silver.
    - c. Its belly and thighs were of brass.
    - d. Its legs were of iron and feet of iron and clay.

- e. A stone was cut out of a mountain without hands and broke the great image in pieces; then the stone grew into a mighty mountain and filled the earth.
- 2. God, through Daniel, gave the meaning of the dream.
  - a. Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon) was the head of gold (612- 538 BC).
  - b. Medo-Persia was the chest and arms of silver (538-331 BC).
  - c. Greece (Macedonian Empire) was the belly and thighs of brass (331-63 BC).
  - d. Rome was the legs and feet of iron and clay (63 BC to 476 AD).
- 3. In the days of the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire), God would set up His kingdom and it would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:40-4).
- 4. A parallel prophecy is found in Daniel 7:1-14.

### **III. THE KINGDOM WAS IN PREPARATION DURING THE PERSONAL MINISTRIES OF JOHN AND JESUS.**

- A. John came as a forerunner to prepare the way for Jesus (Malachi 4:5,6; Matthew 11:13,14; Luke 1:17).
  - 1. John preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1, 2).
  - 2. "At hand" means "within reach," or "very near."
- B. Jesus also prepared for the coming of His kingdom.
  - 1. He too preached that the kingdom was at hand (Matthew 4:17).
  - 2. He taught His disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom (Matthew 6:9,10).
  - 3. He sent His apostles out to preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10:7).

4. He promised to build His church and to give Peter the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:16-19).
  - a. Jesus promised, "I will build My church" (v. 18).
  - b. He also said to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom" (v. 19).
  - c. Please note that "church" and "kingdom" are being used inter-changeably - when the church is built, the kingdom will come and vice versa.
  - d. When we see Peter use the keys to open the door of the church, we will know the kingdom has come.
5. Jesus told His disciples that some of them would live to see the kingdom come with power (Mark 9:1).
  - a. The kingdom would come with power.
  - b. It would come within the lifetime of some of the apostles.
  - c. If the kingdom has not yet come, we must have some apostles among us and they are at least 2,000 years old!!!
6. Jesus told Nicodemus how to enter the kingdom (John 3:3-5).
7. He told Pilate that His kingdom "is not of this world" (John 18:36).
8. He told His apostles He would drink the fruit of the vine with them in the Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:26-29).
  - a. The Lord's supper is in the church (1 Corinthians 11:23-30; Acts 20:7).
  - b. But the Lord partakes of it with His disciples in His kingdom.
  - c. Therefore, the church and the kingdom are the same!
9. After His death, burial and resurrection, the Lord told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem for power from on high (Luke 24:49).
  - a. The kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1).



- b. The power would come with the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-16).
- c. Therefore, we can expect to see the kingdom established shortly after the apostles are baptized in the Holy Spirit!

#### **IV. THE KINGDOM CAME IN PERFECTION ON PENTECOST.**

- A. The time was right - it was in "the last days" (Joel 2:28; Isaiah 2:2; Acts 2:1-17).
  - 1. It was also during the days of the Roman rulers (Daniel 2:40, 44; Luke 2:1; 3:1).
  - 2. Since Rome ruled the world from 63 BC to 476 AD, the kingdom had to come within that time period.
  - 3. Pentecost Day was in 33 AD.
  - 4. This was also within the lifetime of Jesus' apostles (Mark 9:1).
- B. The place was right - it was in Jerusalem.
  - 1. The apostles waited in Jerusalem for power and received it when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4).
  - 2. In Jerusalem there was deliverance (salvation) to those who called on the name of the Lord (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:21, 36-41).
  - 3. The word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3; Acts 1:8; 8:4,5).
- C. Peter used the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:18,19).
  - 1. Keys are used to unlock, to open.
  - 2. Peter was privileged to preach to the Jews on Pentecost and the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius and tell them how to enter the kingdom (Acts 2:14, 38-47; 10:17-11:18).
  - 3. Since the kingdom and the church are the same, when Peter used the keys of the kingdom, people were added to the church (Acts 2:47).

## **Conclusion:**

1. The kingdom of Christ, which is the church of Christ, came on the first Pentecost following our Lord's ascension (Acts 1:9-11; Daniel 7:13,14).
2. We enter the kingdom by being born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5).
  - a. The Jews on Pentecost entered the kingdom when they heard the gospel, repented of their sins and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37,38,41,47).
  - b. Therefore, to be born of water and the Spirit is to hear and believe the Spirit's message, the gospel and be baptized in water for the remission of sins!
3. All references to the kingdom (church) after Pentecost speak of its being in existence (Acts 8:12; 28:30, 31; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9)
4. All forms of premillennialism are proven false by the fact that the kingdom has come and the saved are already in it!!

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the promised Seed of Abraham who has blessed all nations?
2. How has He blessed all nations?
3. From which of Jacob's sons did Jesus descend?
4. Who is the prophet like himself that Moses said God would raise up?
5. Who is the Seed of David who sits on his throne?
6. Who foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit?
7. When and where would the Spirit be poured out?
8. Who prophesied that God's house would be built in Jerusalem in the last days?
9. What is God's house?
10. Who gave the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

11. How many kingdoms were represented by the great image?
12. What did each part of the image represent?
13. When did the Babylonian Empire begin and end?
14. When did the Medo-Persian Empire begin and end?
15. When did the Greek ( Macedonian) Empire begin and end?
16. When did the Roman Empire begin and end?
17. Why did John the baptist come?
18. What did John preach?
19. What did Jesus preach?
20. What does “at hand” mean?
21. Who was promised the keys of the kingdom?
22. Show that “church” and “kingdom” are used interchangeably.
23. What was the nature of the kingdom Jesus established?
24. Prove the church and the kingdom are the same thing.
25. Where were the apostles told to wait? For what were they to wait?
26. When did the Holy Spirit come?
27. Who used the keys of the kingdom on Pentecost day?
28. Who first preached the gospel to the Gentiles?
29. When did the “last days” begin? When will they end?
30. Has the kingdom come? If so, where did it come?
31. How does one enter the kingdom?
32. Should we still pray for the kingdom to come?

33. What does the fact that the kingdom has come do to all forms of premillennialism?
34. Do the references to the kingdom after Pentecost still look forward to the coming of the kingdom?
35. What is the difference between entering the kingdom and entering the church?
36. Where is the parallel prophecy to Daniel 2:31-44 found?
37. If a church began someplace other than Jerusalem, and at some other time than the first Pentecost after the ascension of Christ, could it be the church of Christ? Why, or why not?
38. Are those premillennial preachers who tell us the kingdom is still future preaching the truth?
39. What is the focal passage around which all the rest of the Bible is to be understood according to premillennial teaching?

## **LESSON IV:**

### **IS JESUS COMING SOON?**

#### **Introduction:**

1. A popular religious song proclaims: “Jesus is coming soon!”
2. Signs along the highway announce: Jesus Is Coming Soon! Be Ready!” (Ironically, many of them are painted on steel and set in concrete so they can last for decades).
3. Premillennial preachers fill their books and sermons with predictions of the Lord’s imminent return:
  - a. “The long awaited Messiah of the Bible is coming soon!” (Hal Lindsey in Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 3).
  - b. “It may be today. It may be tomorrow. But one thing is certain. Christ is coming soon!” (Jack Van Impe in 2001-On the Edge of Eternity, p. 204).
  - c. “...we are the end time generation that Jesus spoke of in Luke 21:32: ‘This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled’” (Doug Clark in the Foreword to Shockwaves of Armageddon).
  - d. “The end of the age is upon us. The climax of history will soon take place. The second advent of Christ, the Lord of history, is imminent” (Harold Lindsell, The Gathering Storm, p. 29).
4. Premillennialists have long believed that “Jesus is coming soon.”
5. What does the Bible say about the second coming of Christ? Is it imminent?

#### **Discussion:**

#### **I. THE BIBLE TEACHES THE FACT OF CHRIST’S COMING.**

- A. The parables promise Jesus’ return.
  1. The parable of the tares implies the fact of the second coming and judgment (Matthew 13:40-43).
  2. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins teaches the importance of being prepared for the Lord’s unexpected return (Matthew 25:1-13).

3. The parable of the sheep and goats tells of the Lord's return to judge all nations (Matthew 25:31-46).
- B. Jesus Himself promised to return.
1. He said that when He comes, He will be ashamed of those who have been ashamed of Him (Mark 8:38).
  2. He plainly promised the apostles: "I will come again" (John 14:1-3).
- C. The angels at His ascension promised that Christ would come again (Acts 1:9-11).
- D. The apostles promised Christ's return.
1. Paul prayed: "O Lord, come!" (1 Corinthians 16:22).
  2. Paul penned: "...if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:14)."
  3. Peter proclaimed: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...." (2 Peter 3:10).
  4. John preached: "Behold, He is coming with the clouds...." (Revelation 1:7).
  5. The early Christians eagerly awaited the Lord's return (1 Thessalonians 1:9,10).
  6. If we believe the Bible, we must believe in the second coming of the Christ!

## **II. THE BIBLE TEACHES THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S COMING!**

- A. Christ will come personally (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Acts 1:11).
1. He will not send a representative.
  2. It will not be a figurative coming.
- B. Christ will come visibly.
1. He ascended in plain view; He will return in the same way (Acts 1:9-11).

2. His coming will be as apparent as the flashing lightning (Matthew 24:26,27).
  3. Everyone will see Him including those who crucified Him (Revelation 1:7).
- C. Christ will come audibly (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
1. "With a shout!"
  2. "With the voice of the archangel!"
  3. "With the trumpet of God!"
- D. Christ will come suddenly!
1. "As a thief in the night" (Matthew 24:43; 1 Thessalonians 5:2,3; 2 Peter 3:10).
  2. "As in the days before the flood..." (Matthew 24:37-39).
  3. "As labor pains upon a woman with child" (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

### **III. THE BIBLE TEACHES THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S COMING.**

- A. The purpose of the second coming will not be:
1. To set up His kingdom for He has already accomplished this (Matthew 16:18,19; Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26).
  2. To reign on earth for He is already reigning from heaven (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:29-31; 1 Timothy 6:15).
  3. To live on this earth for He is going to burn it up (2 Peter 3:10,11; 1 Thessalonians 4:17).
- B. The purpose of the second coming will be:
1. To raise the dead (John 5:28, 29; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).
  2. To judge the world (Acts 17:30,31).
  3. To destroy the earth (2 Peter 3:10,11).

4. To reward the righteous and punish the wicked (Matthew 25:34, 41, 46).

#### **IV. THE BIBLE DOES NOT TEACH THE TIME OF CHRIST'S COMING.**

- A. Many have set dates for the time of the Lord's return.
  1. William Miller said the Lord would return between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844; when this proved wrong, he set the date for October 22, 1844; he was wrong again!!!
  2. Charles Taze Russell predicted the Lord's return in 1879 and 1914 and was wrong both times!
  3. Premillennial prognosticators periodically set dates for the Lord's return, but they have always been proven wrong!
- B. "No one knows the time of the Lord's return!"
  1. The angels do not know (Matthew 24:36).
  2. Our Lord did not know when He was living upon this earth (Mark 13:32).
  3. Some say, "We can't know the day or hour, but we can know the general time," but all that is said about the sudden and unexpected nature of the Lord's coming and the fact that no signs are given precludes even knowing the general time!
- C. There are three things we can know definitely about the delay in the Lord's return:
  1. The great "falling away" had to come first (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).
  2. The Lord's delay is because of His desire that all come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).
  3. The Lord's coming will be when least expected (Matthew 24:44).

#### **Conclusion:**

1. The second coming of Christ is one of the cardinal doctrines of Christianity!
  - a. One cannot deny the fact of the second coming without denying the Bible.



- b. However, a belief in the second coming does not require a belief in any system of premillennialism.
- 2. Christians do not dread the second coming, but joyfully await it because it is the fruition of our hope ( 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Peter 3:11,12).
- 3. It is not necessary to know the time of the Lord's return, but it is imperative to be prepared for the Lord's return!

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. What are four things we can know about the manner of the Lord's coming?
- 2. Name three things which will not be the purpose of the second coming?
- 3. Name some prominent preachers in history who are known for setting dates for the Lord's return.
- 4. What are four things which the Lord will do at His second coming?
- 5. Do the angels know the time of the second coming?
- 6. When Jesus was upon the earth, did He know the time of His return?
- 7. Who alone, according to the Lord's own statement, knew the time of His second coming?
- 8. Do you think we can truthfully sing, "Jesus Is Coming Soon!" Why? Why not?
- 9. Show that many of the parables of the Lord teach or imply the second coming.
- 10. Give at least two Scriptures where Jesus promised to return.
- 11. What did Paul pray in reference to the second coming?
- 12. Refute the statement, "We can't know the day or the hour, but we can know the general time of the Lord's return."
- 13. Does a belief in the second coming require a belief in premillennialism?
- 14. Which is more important - to know the time of the second coming, or to be prepared for it?
- 15. What are three things we can know definitely about the Lord's delay?

16. Prove that the second coming will not be invisible or visible only to a selected few.

## LESSON V:

### PALESTINE IN THE PREMILLENNIAL PLAN

#### Introduction:

1. Premillennialists attach great importance to the physical land of Palestine.
  - a. "... the land of Palestine is designed by God to be the centerpiece of the events surrounding the end times" (Harold Lindsell, The Gathering Storm, p. 26).
  - b. "Israel is one of the keys to the end of the age. Whoever loses sight of Israel and its role in the events connected with the consummation of history has an incorrect view of the second advent of Jesus" (Harold Lindsell, The Gathering Storm, p. 37).
2. Since the premillennial plan requires Jesus to return to the planet earth, fight a carnal war (Armageddon) and rule over a material kingdom from the city of Jerusalem, Palestine is of paramount importance to them.
3. Concerning Palestine, premillennialists make the following arguments:
  - a. The land promise to Abraham has never been fulfilled.
  - b. The Jews must return to the land and be converted before Jesus comes again.
  - c. The Jewish temple must be rebuilt and the old Jewish sacrificial system restored.
  - d. The battle to end all battles will be fought in Palestine at Megiddo.
  - e. Christ will then rule the earth from the literal throne of David in the literal city of Jerusalem for 1,000 literal years.
4. Are the premillennialists' assertions true? What does the Bible really say?

#### Discussion:

#### I. PALESTINE'S HISTORY FOR THE PAST 2,000 YEARS PROVIDES THE PERSPECTIVE FOR THE PREMILLENNIAL PLAN.

- A. The Romans expelled the Jews from Jerusalem and Palestine.

1. In A.D. 70, the Roman army led by Titus razed Jerusalem to the ground as Jesus had predicted 40 years before (Matthew 23:34-24:35).
  2. The fall of the fortress on Masada in 73 ended the revolt against Rome.
  3. In 132 - 135, as a result of the Bar Kochba rebellion, the Jews were banished from Jerusalem.
- B. The Jews were scattered over the earth for the next 1800 years without a land to call their own.
1. They were never fully accepted anywhere.
  2. They were often victims of discrimination and persecution.
- C. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Zionist Movement began in Europe.
1. Zionists campaigned for a Jewish homeland.
  2. As a result, some Jews began to settle in Palestine.
  3. In 1917, the League of Nations recognized the existence of a Jewish state in Palestine.
  4. Because of the Holocaust, thousands of European Jews flocked to this Jewish homeland following World War II.
  5. The Arabs, who had owned the land for many centuries, were displaced to make room for the Jews; this created the conflict which continues today between Jews and Arabs.
- D. On May 14, 1948, Israel officially became recognized as a nation.
1. Hal Lindsey wrote: "The prophets had stated clearly that when the nation of Israel was reborn, as it was in 1948, this historic event would signal that the Coming of the Lord and Saviour was very near" (The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 143).
  2. Lindsey also said that Israel's possession of Palestine for the first time in thousands of years, along with the talk of rebuilding the temple, is the most important prophetic sign that Jesus Christ's

coming is before us and sets the stage for the prophetic end time events to follow (The Late Great Planet Earth, pp. 57, 58).

3. Harold Lindsell says: "There is no reason to believe that anyone will get the Jews out of Palestine. This must mean that the fig tree is beginning to bud. Those things which are happening allow us to conclude that **the Lord will come before this generation passes from the scene**" (The Gathering Storm, p. 47).
4. Jack Van Impe say that Hosea 6:2 was fulfilled on May 14, 1948 when Israel became a nation (2001-On the Edge of Eternity, p.31).

## II. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE LAND PROMISE WAS FULFILLED!

- A. God promised to give the land of Canaan (Palestine) to Abraham and his seed (Genesis 12:7).
  1. Palestine would provide the homeland for the nation through which the Messiah would come into the world.
  2. The boundaries of the land were from the Euphrates River to the River of Egypt and from the wilderness to the Mediterranean Sea (Genesis 15:18-21; Deuteronomy 1:7; 11:24).
- B. God fulfilled His promise to give them the land.
  1. "So the Lord gave to Israel **all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it.** The Lord gave them rest all around according to all He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them: the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass (Joshua 21:43-45).
  2. In his farewell address, Joshua said: "Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that **not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you: not one word of them has failed** (Joshua 23:14).
  3. When David was king, he recovered the part of the land which had been taken by their enemies (2 Samuel 8:3).

4. "Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms from the River (Euphrates) to the land of the Philistines, as far as the borders of Egypt" (1 Kings 4:21).
5. After the Babylonian Captivity, Nehemiah confirmed that God had given Israel all the land He had promised them (Nehemiah 9:7,8).

### **III. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT POSSESSION OF THE LAND WAS CONDITIONAL.**

- A. The conditional nature of God's promises is often stated and/or implied (Jeremiah 18:5-10; Jonah 1:2; 3:1-4:2; Ezekiel 33).
- B. The possession of the land was conditioned upon Israel's faithfulness and obedience (Deuteronomy 28:1-68).
- C. The promise of David's seed ruling Israel was also conditional (2 Samuel 7:12-17; 1 Kings 9:6,7).
  1. After Coniah, the throne of David was declared vacant until its rightful owner came (Jeremiah 22:28-30; Ezekiel 21:25-27).
  2. Christ is the rightful Heir; even now He reigns on David's throne (Luke 1:32,33; Acts 2:29,30).

### **IV. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE PROMISE OF RETURNING TO THE LAND WAS FULFILLED IN THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.**

- A. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. wrote: "The millennial method is to collect and collate all these passages which have been fulfilled in the events of the Old Testament and attempt to make them refer to the future" (God's Prophetic Word, p. 119).
- B. When a prophecy was given, it had a meaning; the original meaning can not be changed without altering the Word of God (Deuteronomy 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18,19).
  1. It is wrong for premillennialists to take prophecies which foretold the return from Babylonian captivity and the rebuilding of the temple, and make them refer to a future restoration of Israel (cf. Ezekiel 37).
  2. It is also wrong to take passages which prophesy of the church and make them apply to a future millennial kingdom on this earth, but

this is done by premillennialists in their search for texts to support their theories.

**V. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS GOD'S CHOSEN NATION TODAY.**

- A. The true Jew is not physical, but spiritual (Romans 2:28,29; Galatians 3:26-28).
- B. The church of Christ is God's chosen nation today (Galatians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9).
- C. Israel (fleshly Jews) must be saved by obedience to the faith in the same way that Gentiles are saved (Romans 11:20, 26, 30).
  - 1. **"Houtos signifies this, in this way, in this manner.** And so, or in this way, all Israel shall be saved. In what way? Hardness has happened to Israel until (but no longer) the full sum of the Gentiles come in. But by the time the full sum is in, the hardness will have ceased. So soon as this occurs, Israel's unbelief will give place to belief; belief will be followed by obedience, and in obedience they will be saved" (Moses E. Lard, Commentary on Romans, p. 370).
  - 2. There is one gospel for both Jew and Gentile, one Savior, one church and one plan of salvation (Romans 1:16, 17; Romans 10:12,13; Ephesians 2:13-18).

**Conclusion:**

- 1. God gave Israel a land for possession so He could send the Savior into the world.
- 2. God's gift of the land to Israel was conditioned upon their continued faithfulness.
- 3. Israel lost the land in the Assyrian and Babylonians captivities, but later a remnant returned.
- 4. The Christ came of this remnant, but most of them rejected Christ and were cast out of the land as God's judgment upon them.
- 5. Judaism, as a way of salvation, came to an end at the cross of Christ, and as a nation, it came to an end in God's judgment upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Colossians 2:11-17; Matthew 24:1-35).

6. The chosen nation of God today is the church of Christ where Jew and Gentile come to God on the same basis and receive the same blessings.
7. Palestine is of no more significance to God than any other place on this earth!

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What did Hal Lindsey say about the land of Palestine?
2. What are five assertions made by premillennialists about Palestine?
3. When were the Jews finally banished from Jerusalem by the Romans?
4. What is the movement called which advocated a homeland for the Jews?
5. When was the modern state of Israel officially accepted as a nation?
6. What did Hal Lindsey prophesy about this date?
7. Prove from the Scriptures that God fulfilled the land promise to Israel?
8. What were the boundaries of the Promised Land?
9. Did Israel ever reach these boundaries?
10. How much of the Promised Land did Solomon reign over?
11. Prove from the Scriptures that God's promises are always conditioned upon man's obedience and faithfulness.
12. When did the throne of David become vacant?
13. When was it re-occupied and by whom?
14. Why was it necessary for God to have a chosen nation?
15. Of what importance to the plan of God is Palestine today?
16. Must a prophecy always retain the meaning it had when originally given?
17. When will Christ begin to reign on David's throne?
18. How will all the people of Israel who are saved be saved today?



19. Does God have a plan of salvation for the Jews which is different from the plan of salvation for the Gentiles?
20. Who are the chosen people of God today?
21. Why is there enmity between Jews and Arabs today?
22. Do the Jews have any more claim to the land of Palestine than do the Arabs?
23. Is premillennialism a physical system or a spiritual system?



## **LESSON VI:**

### **MISCONCEPTIONS OF MATTHEW 24 (1)**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Matthew 24 is one of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted chapters in the entire Bible!
2. Premillennialists believe Matthew 24 provides the framework for their theory.
  - a. They teach that the signs mentioned in Matthew 24 are indications of the approaching end of this age and the second coming of Christ to establish His millennial kingdom on this earth.
  - b. Hal Lindsey says: "Jesus also told us that once this chain of events got started, that generation would see all of the end time events fulfilled: 'Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.' And this section of Matthew is not the only place in Scripture that describes this sequence of events" ( Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 130).
3. Does Matthew 24 really forecast the events leading up to the second coming of Christ? What does the Bible really teach?

#### **Discussion:**

### **II. MATTHEW 24 MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN ITS LARGER CONTEXT.**

- A. A basic rule of Biblical interpretation is: "Always consider the context."
- B. The context of Matthew 24 begins with Jesus' triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem (Matthew 21).
  1. This began the chain of events leading to His death on the cross.
  2. Throughout the ministry of Christ, the religious leaders of the Jews had opposed Him.
  3. He further angered them by cleansing the temple (Matthew 21:12, 13).
  4. He successfully turned the tables on their challenge to His authority (Matthew 21:23-27).

- C. The parables of chapters 21 and 22 were spoken against the Jewish leaders because of their rejection of the Christ.
1. The parable of the two sons showed that tax collectors and prostitutes were ahead of the priests and elders in doing the Lord's will (Matthew 21:28-32).
  2. The parable of the vineyard illustrates the Jews' history of rejecting the prophets God had sent to them; it also predicts they will kill God's Son (Matthew 21:33-41).
  3. The parable of the marriage feast teaches that the kingdom will be given to the Gentiles because the Jews have rejected it (Matthew 22:1-14).
- D. Chapter 23 is a stinging rebuke of the Jewish religious leaders for their hypocrisy (Matthew 23:1-33).
1. The chapter closes with a pronouncement of judgment upon Jerusalem (Matthew 23:34-39).
  2. Jesus said: "**All these things** shall come upon **this** generation" (Matthew 23:36).
- E. Chapter 25 is also a part of the larger context.
1. Chapters 21-23 dealt only with Jerusalem and the rejection of Jesus by the Jews.
  2. Chapter 25 contains three parables of the second coming of Christ, the final Judgment and the end of the world.
    - a. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins teaches the necessity of preparation at all times (Matthew 25:1-13).
    - b. The parable of the talents teaches the importance of using our opportunities for the Lord because we will be called to account at the second coming of Christ (Matthew 25:14-30).
    - c. The parable of the sheep and goats teaches the basis for Judgment will be our works; it closes with heaven for the righteous and hell for the unrighteous (Matthew 25:31-46).
- F. Remember: the context **leading up to** Matthew 24 deals with God's coming judgment upon the Jews and Jerusalem for rejecting Christ; the

context **following** Matthew 24 deals with the second coming of Christ and the final Judgment!

## II. MATTHEW 24 MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN ITS IMMEDIATE CONTEXT.

- A. Jesus' disciples pointed out to Him the magnificent structure of Herod's temple (Matthew 24:1,2).
  - 1. Perhaps His statement to the Jews, "Your house is left to you desolate," was in their minds?
  - 2. The Lord must have shocked His disciples with His reply: "Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2).
- B. Later the disciples came to Jesus with a question: (Matthew 24:3).
  - 1. "When shall these things be?"
  - 2. "What will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"
  - 3. Perhaps the disciples thought that anything as momentous as the destruction of the temple could only happen at the end of the world?
- C. The Lord answered two questions:
  - 1. "When shall these things be?" is answered in verses 4 - 35.
  - 2. "What will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?" is answered beginning in verse 36 and going through 25:46.
- D. That two separate questions are answered by the Lord can be seen in the following:
  - 1. **Signs** for the destruction of Jerusalem are given in verses 4 - 35.
  - 2. **No signs** of the second coming at the end of the world are given from verse 36 through 25:46, but the point is made repeatedly, "Watch, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming!"
  - 3. The phrase "all these things" is used several times to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:36; 24:2, 3, 6, 8, 33, 34).

4. "In those days" is also used to refer to the events leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:19, 22, 29).
5. The generation **then** living would see "all these things" take place in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:34).
6. A clear contrast is seen in verse 36: "**But of that day and that hour** no one knows..." it is obvious that "that day" is contrasted with "those days."

### Conclusion:

1. Matthew, chapter 24, is often misunderstood because the context is not considered.
2. It is important to consider the larger context as well as the immediate context.
3. The disciples may have thought that the destruction of the temple, the coming of the Lord in judgment and the end of the world would all happen at the same time.
4. It is clear from the context that Jesus answers two questions:
  - a. "When shall these things be?" - the destruction of Jerusalem.
  - b. "What will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"
5. Signs are given for the approaching destruction of Jerusalem; none will be given for the second coming of the Lord.
6. In our next lesson, we shall study the Lord's answers to the disciples' questions.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What a basic rule of Biblical interpretation which must be applied in order to understand Matthew 24?
2. What the two questions which Jesus answered in Matthew 24?
3. At what point (which verses) does Jesus make a transition from one question to another?
4. Where does the context of Matthew 24 begin?

5. Where does the context of Matthew 24 end?
6. Name the parables of the second coming which are found in Matthew 25.





## **LESSON VII:**

### **MISCONCEPTIONS OF MATTHEW 24 (2)**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Premillennialists misapply Matthew 24 in an effort to find signs to warn us that the coming of Christ is very near.
2. In this lesson, we shall see that Jesus answers two separate questions:
  - a. The first answer tells the signs of the approach of God's judgment on Jerusalem.
  - b. The second answer makes it clear that there will be no signs of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world.
3. Jesus makes it clear that the destruction of Jerusalem will happen in the lifetime of the generation then living, but the second coming of Christ will be sudden and unexpected.

#### **Discussion:**

#### **I. THE SIGNS IN MATTHEW 24 WERE FULFILLED IN THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM IN A.D. 70.**

- A. False Christs would come (verse 5).
  1. Josephus, Jerome, Justin, Irenaeus and Origin all told of men who came claiming to be the Christ in the period prior to the fall of Jerusalem.
  2. Disciples of Christ must be on their guard: "Take heed that no one deceive you."
- B. There would be "wars and rumors of wars" (verses 6, 7).
  1. At the time Jesus made the prophecy, there was peace throughout the Roman world.
  2. In the five year period before the siege of Jerusalem, Rome was torn by insurrections within, and attacks from without.
    - a. In just one year, four emperors sat on the throne of Rome.

- b. Thousands of Jews were slaughtered in Alexandria, Damascus and Caesarea.
  - c. The Jewish revolt against Rome began in 67 and did not end until 73.
- C. Famine, pestilences and earthquakes would come (verse 7).
  - 1. Acts 11:28,29 tells of a worldwide famine which took place in the days of Claudius Caesar.
  - 2. A plague in Rome during the reign of Nero killed 30,000.
  - 3. Josephus and Tacitus both tell of plagues ravaging Babylon in A.D. 40 and Italy in A.D. 66.
  - 4. An unusual number of earthquakes of great severity were reported during this period of time.
    - a. An earthquake on the day that Nero became emperor in 54.
    - b. Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake in 60.
    - c. Pompeii was hit by an earthquake in 63.
    - d. Rome was shaken by an earthquake in 68.
    - e. There were also earthquakes in Crete, Smyrna, Chios, Miletus, Samos, Hierapolis, Colossae and Campania.
    - f. Josephus interpreted the number and frequency of these earthquakes as a sign of coming destruction upon man (Wars, Book 4, Chapter 4:5).
- D. A general persecution would come upon God's people (verses 9, 10).
  - 1. Jesus had warned of this earlier (Matthew 10:16-23).
  - 2. Paul also warned of it (Acts 14:22; 1 Timothy 3:12).
  - 3. The church in Jerusalem was persecuted periodically by the Jews (Acts 7:8-8:4; 12).
  - 4. Nero persecuted Christians in Rome beginning in 64.

5. Both Peter and Paul were probably put to death during this time.
  6. The book of First Peter was written to encourage the Christians during a time of persecution against Christians.
- E. False prophets would seek to lead many astray (verse 11).
1. Jesus had warned earlier that “wolves in sheep’s clothing” would come (Matthew 7:15).
  2. Paul had also warned the Ephesians elders that “savage wolves” would come in among the disciples (Acts 20:29,30).
- F. Some Christians would become lukewarm and indifferent and some would fall away (verses 12, 13).
1. It would be extremely difficult for one to maintain his faith through such trying conditions (Matthew 13:20,21).
  2. Paul spoke of “the present distress” (1 Corinthians 7:26).
  3. The book of Hebrews reflects a growing indifference and danger of falling away among the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea (Hebrews 2:1; 4:1; 5:11-16; 6:4-9; 10:24-39).
  4. The “end” of verse 13 does not refer to the end of the world, but to the end of the Jews’ war with Rome.
- G. The gospel would be preached to the whole world before the destruction of Jerusalem (verse 14).
1. The faith of the church at Rome was spoken of throughout the whole world (Romans 1:8).
  2. In A.D. 62, Paul wrote to the Christians at Colossae that the “gospel was preached to every creature under heaven” (Colossians 1:23).
- H. The presence of the “abomination of desolation” would be the immediate sign that would signal the destruction of Jerusalem (verse 15).
1. The parallel passage in Luke tells what “the abomination of desolation” is - “But when you see Jerusalem **surrounded by armies**, then know that its desolation is near” (Luke 21:20).

2. The shields and flags of the Roman soldiers had images of eagles and of the Roman emperor on them.
  - a. The Romans worshiped these emblems and were therefore guilty of idolatry, an abomination in God's sight (Exodus 20:3-5).
  - b. Josephus describes what happened soon after Jerusalem fell: "And now the Romans, upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings round about it, brought their shields to the Temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there they did offer sacrifices to them (Wars of the Jews, Book 6, Chapter 6).
3. The destruction of Jerusalem was foretold by Daniel the prophet (Daniel 9:24-27).
  - a. "Seven weeks" would be the time from the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem until the completion of the walls by Nehemiah.
  - b. "Sixty-two weeks" would be the period of time from the rebuilding of the walls to the coming of Christ.
  - c. The coming of Christ until the destruction of Jerusalem would be "one week" - thus Daniel's prophecy covered the final history of Jerusalem from its rebuilding to its destruction at the hands of the Romans in A.D. 70.

## **II. JESUS' DISCIPLES MUST FLEE THE CITY WHEN THEY SEE THE APPROACH OF THE ROMAN ARMY.**

- A. In 67, the Roman army began the siege of Jerusalem and then suddenly withdrew briefly to Caesarea.
  1. During this brief interval, the Christians who were in Jerusalem, remembering the Lord's words, fled from the city to Pella in the mountains east of the Jordan.
  2. The Roman general, Vespasian, soon thereafter returned to besiege the city.
    - a. When Vespasian was called to Rome to become emperor, his son, Titus, took command of his army and completed the siege.

- b. The siege lasted for 134 days; on August 10, A.D. 70, the walls were broken through and the city taken.
  - c. More than one million people died in the city during the siege and the battle which followed; 97,000 survived to be sold into slavery.
  - d. Eusebius says that not a single Christian perished because they heeded the Lord's warning in this chapter.
- B. The warnings given to flee prove that the destruction of Jerusalem, not the end of the world, is under consideration ( verses 16 - 23).
  - 1. At the second coming of Christ, it will be pointless to flee to the mountains in an effort to escape (verse 16).
  - 2. At the second coming, it will also be pointless to warn people not to go back to take anything out of their houses (verse 17 & 18).
  - 3. At the second coming, there will be no reason to tell pregnant women or nursing mothers of the difficulties of travel (verse 19).
  - 4. At the second coming, there will be no point in praying that the flight not be in winter, or on a sabbath day when the gates of the city would be closed and travel be restricted by Jewish regulations ( verse 20).
  - 5. All of these indicate a temporal flight from an advancing army such as occurred at Jerusalem in the period prior to its final destruction.
- C. Great tribulation came upon the unfortunate souls trapped in Jerusalem during its siege and overthrow.
  - 1. Premillennialists refer this "great tribulation" to a supposed period of persecution of Christians upon the earth seven years before the return of Christ.
    - a. However, some premillennialists teach that Christians will be in the "Rapture" during the tribulation upon the earth.
    - b. If Christians are "raptured," who will be left to undergo the "Great Tribulation?"
  - 2. Conditions in Jerusalem were among the worst ever known in human history.

- a. Josephus says starvation was so severe women ate their own children.
  - b. The Jews constantly fought each other within the city while fighting the Romans outside.
  - c. When the city finally was taken, the massacre was so great, the streets ran with blood.
- 3. During this horrible time, false Christs and false prophets would come (verses 24 - 28).
  - a. People should not be deceived by such false claims.
  - b. Christ will not come secretly, but as openly as the lightning flashing across the sky!
  - c. Just as a rotting corpse draws the vultures so Jerusalem, center of the dead, corrupt system of Judaism, would be destroyed by the Roman army whose emblem was the eagle.
- D. An apocalyptic picture of the fall of Judaism is painted by Jesus (verses 29-31).
  - 1. Apocalyptic language is highly figurative speech which employs bigger than life symbols such as the sun, moon and stars to represent individuals, governments and nations.
    - a. Isaiah 13 uses apocalyptic language to picture the fall of Babylon ( see verses 1, 10, 13).
    - b. Isaiah 19 pictures the Lord riding a cloud coming in judgment upon Egypt.
    - c. Ezekiel 32:7 uses apocalyptic language to describe the defeat of Egypt.
  - 2. When Jerusalem fell, Judaism, as a system was completely gone (verse 29).
    - a. The worship in the temple ceased.
    - b. The priesthood no longer functioned.

- c. All the genealogical records were destroyed so that no one could any longer legally prove his tribal ancestry thus making it impossible for Israel as a nation ever to function again.
- 3. The Lord figuratively came in the clouds to judge Judaism in the destruction of Jerusalem (verse 30).
- 4. An angel is a messenger; here the term is used for gospel preachers who carried God's gospel message to the world (verse 30).
  - a. Following the destruction of Jerusalem, the church was finally and fully freed from Judaism and the opposition of the Jews.
  - b. The church enjoyed a great burst of growth as preachers went out unhindered to take the gospel to every corner of the earth.
- 5. Jesus concluded His prediction with the parable of the fig tree (verses 32, 33).
  - a. The leafing of the tree was a sure sign of the nearness of summer.
  - b. The appearance of "all these things" would indicate the nearness of Jerusalem's destruction.
- E. Jesus assured His disciples that "all these things" would certainly come to pass (verses 34 & 35).
  - 1. It would happen during the generation **then** living!
  - 2. When a prophecy has been as clearly fulfilled as this one, it is twisting the Word of God to apply it to some future event (2 Peter 3:16).

### III. THE SECOND (FINAL) COMING OF CHRIST IS DESCRIBED.

- A. A clear transition is made at verse 36.
  - 1. "But" is an adversative which indicates a contrast between what has gone before with what follows.
  - 2. In verses 4 -34 we read of "all these things" and "in those days;" now we read of **"that day and that hour!"**

3. In verses 4-34, we read of numerous signs which indicated the nearness of the event described; now we read of no signs.
- B. No one knows the time of the Lord's return ( verse 36).
1. The angels do not know!
  2. The Son, when He was on this earth, did not know!
  3. Only the Father, in His infinite wisdom, knew!
- C. The return of Christ will be sudden and unexpected (verses 37- 51).
1. It will take people by surprise as did the Great Flood (verses 37-39).
  2. The faithful, living and dead, will rise to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).
  3. The importance of being ready at all times is repeatedly emphasized (verses 40 -51).

### **Conclusion:**

1. Matthew 24 answers two questions:
  - a. What will be the sign of the Lord's coming in judgment upon Jerusalem?
  - b. What will be the sign of His coming to judge the world at the Last Day?
2. The signs for the approaching destruction of Jerusalem are given in verses 4-35, but no signs are given for the second coming.
3. The lesson for us is: "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:44).

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are some of the signs of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem?
2. What is the "abomination of desolation?"
3. Which Old Testament prophet foretold the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70?



4. How many Christians perished in the destruction of Jerusalem?
5. How did the Christians manage to escape the city?
6. Where did they flee?
7. How many survivors were sold into slavery?
8. Which Roman general began the siege? Which one completed it?
9. What is apocalyptic language?
10. What are some of the signs by which we can know that the return of Christ is at hand?
11. How many know the actual time when Christ will return? How many know the general time?
12. Explain the significance of the phrase "all these things."
13. Give two passages which indicate the gospel was taken to the whole world in the period before the destruction of Jerusalem?
14. What were the images which were displayed on the shields of Roman soldiers?
15. When did Jerusalem fall (day, month, year)?
16. To what does the "great tribulation" of verse 21 refer?
17. In apocalyptic language, what do symbols of sun, moon and stars represent?
18. What is the great lesson from Matthew 24 for Christians today in regard to the second coming of Christ?
19. Should we listen to premillennial preachers who misapply Scripture in an attempt to prove their theory?
20. Does the fact that we hear of wars, famines and earthquakes today mean the second coming is near?
21. Were Christians ever persecuted before the destruction of Jerusalem?
22. Did any Christians ever become lukewarm and indifferent before the fall of Jerusalem? Were any ever in danger of falling away?

23. How sure of fulfillment were the words Jesus spoke?

## **LESSON VIII:**

### **HAVE YOU REALLY READ REVELATION?**

#### **Introduction:**

1. The book of Revelation is probably the most misunderstood and misapplied book in all the Bible!
2. False teachers of every kind seek to find support for their speculations in its pages.
3. Premillennialists rely on Revelation more than on any other book in their attempt to find Scriptural support for their system.
4. Does Revelation really teach all the bizarre and sensational things premillennialists claim it teaches?

#### **Discussion:**

#### **I. REVELATION HAS A MESSAGE FOR US TODAY!**

- A. A blessing is pronounced upon those who read and heed its teachings (Revelation 1:3).
  1. God expects us to study Revelation.
  2. Why would He have included it in His Word if it is impossible for us to understand it?
- B. A curse is pronounced upon those who pervert its teachings (Revelation 22:18,19).

#### **II. REVELATION MUST BE STUDIED IN ITS HISTORICAL SETTING.**

- A. A great persecution against the church in the Roman Empire, but especially in the province of Asia, had been unleashed by the emperor.
- B. At the end of the first century, Asia was the “Bible Belt” of the Roman Empire.
  1. Paul preached in Ephesus on his second and third missionary journeys (Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-20:1).

2. John made his home in Ephesus after the destruction of Jerusalem according to early historical sources.
- C. About A.D. 95, the Roman emperor, Domitian, ordered incense be burned to his image as a token of allegiance to Rome; Christians refused to do this and were severely persecuted as a result.
1. John was exiled to Patmos (Revelation 1:9).
  2. The Lord warned the church at Philadelphia of “the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world” (Revelation 3:10).
  3. Souls who had been slain for the Word of God are pictured as being in the Lord’s presence (Revelation 6:9-10).
  4. Others would be killed for their faith before the persecution ran its course (Revelation 6:11).
- D. Roman persecution against Christians began in the reign of Nero in A.D. 64.
1. It continued at intervals until Galerious issued the Edict of Toleration in 311.
  2. Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313 which allowed freedom of worship for all religions (Earl Cairns, Christianity Through the Centuries, pp. 95-103).
- E. The purpose of Revelation was to give comfort and courage to the saints.
1. Christ is aware of His people’s suffering and will be with them.
    - a. He has washed us from our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5).
    - b. He is coming again to punish those who persecute His people (Revelation 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10).
    - c. Though persecutions rage on earth, He is on his throne in heaven and in full control (Revelation 1:8).
    - d. He is intimately aware of the needs of His churches (Revelation 1:12,13,20).

- e. He has overcome death and taken it captive (Revelation 1:18).
- 2. Revelation replies to Paul's question in Romans 8:35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"
- 3. Revelation teaches that Christians are "more than conquerors" through Jesus Christ (Romans 8:37).
- 4. Although originally written to comfort Christians in the persecution they were facing in the first century, Revelation's message of hope is relevant to troubled Christians in all nations and in all ages.

### **III. REVELATION MUST BE INTERPRETED ACCORDING TO ITS TYPE OF LANGUAGE.**

- A. Revelation is written in signs {symbols, figures} (Revelation 1:1).
  - 1. It must not be taken literally as one would a historical account such as the book of Acts.
  - 2. Signs, symbols represent men, movements, ideas and principles.
- B. Some of the signs in Revelation are:
  - 1. Christ is presented both as a lion and a lamb (Revelation 5:5,6).
  - 2. The Devil is pictured as a great dragon (Revelation 12:3,9).
  - 3. Beasts are used to represent governments (Revelation 13:1-5, 11-14).
  - 4. Numbers are commonly used with symbolic meaning:
    - a. Three is the number of the Godhead.
    - b. Seven is the number for perfection (Revelation 1:11,12,20; 5:1; 8:1,2,6; 15:6,7).
    - c. Forty-two months, 1,260 days, three and one half, or a time, times and half a time refer to half of seven and thus signifies incomplete, indefinite (Revelation 11:2,3,9,11;13:5)
    - d. Twelve is the number of God's people (Revelation 4:4; 7:4-8; 14:1; 21:12-21).

- e. Ten is for perfection - seven for perfect plus three, the number of the Godhead (Revelation 5:11;7:4;20:2,3).
  - f. Six is the number of imperfection, thus evil (Revelation 13:18).
  - g. Four represents all directions, the whole of anything (Revelation 4:6-8; 7:1).
  - h. Two is the number for strength (Revelation 11:3-10).
  - i. Multiples of a number intensify it; thus 666 signifies great evil.
- B. The particular type of figurative writing found in Revelation is known as apocalyptic language.
- 1. This kind of language was often used in time of persecution.
  - 2. It had two purposes:
    - a. To reveal a message to the persecuted ones.
    - b. To conceal the message from the persecutors.
  - 3. In apocalyptic language, the message was usually presented through visions.
  - 4. Apocalyptic language also contains a predictive element: "It pictured the present as a time of evil, turmoil, persecution, upheaval, but the future was predicted to be a glorious period of vindication, triumph and freedom from all the handicaps which beset us here" (Ray Summers, Worthy is the Lamb, p. 19).
  - 5. One interprets apocalyptic language by finding the one central truth which is being set forth by the symbol and then letting the details fit in naturally; don't over-interpret!

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Four good commentaries will greatly aid the student in understanding the book of Revelation:
  - a. Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary by Homer Hailey.

- b. Revelation Through First Century Glasses by W.B. West, Jr.
  - c. Worthy is the Lamb by Ray Summers.
  - d. More Than Conquerors by William Hendricksen.
- 2. Remember: the central message of Revelation can be understood by diligent study.
  - 3. Premillennialists make three big mistakes in their use of Revelation:
    - a. They project to the future many events which have already been fulfilled.
    - b. They make figurative terms literal.
    - c. They ignore the historical context.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. How do we know God wants us to study the book of Revelation?
- 2. What was the "Bible Belt" of the Roman Empire at the end of the first century?
- 3. Name two apostles who labored extensively in the province of Asia.
- 4. Where was John when he saw the visions of the book of Revelation? Why was he there?
- 5. When did Roman persecution against the church begin? When did it end?
- 6. Why was Revelation written?
- 7. Does Revelation have any meaning or message for us today?
- 8. What do signs and symbols represent?
- 9. What is the symbolic significance of the number two? Four? Six? Seven? Ten? Twelve?
- 10. What kind of language is found in the book of Revelation?
- 11. What are two purposes of apocalyptic language?
- 12. By what means is the message of apocalyptic language usually presented?

13. How does one interpret apocalyptic language?
14. Name four commentaries on Revelation which will help one to understand it.
15. What are three big mistakes premillennialists make in regard to the book of Revelation?
16. What is probably the most misapplied and misunderstood book in the Bible?
17. Which book of the Bible do premillennialists most often rely upon for proof of their system?
18. Who was the particular Roman emperor who was persecuting the saints at the time Revelation was written?
19. When was Revelation written?
20. When was apocalyptic language most often used?



## **LESSON IX:**

### **WILL ROME BE REVIVED BEFORE CHRIST COMES?**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Dispensationalists deny that Christ has set up His kingdom on earth.
  - a. They claim He came the first time to establish His kingdom, but was prevented from doing so because the Jews rejected Him.
  - b. They contend He set up the church as a temporary measure.
  - c. They further contend He is coming again in order to establish His kingdom.
2. Since Daniel, chapter two clearly teaches that the kingdom will be set up during the Roman Empire, premillennialists claim Rome will be revived before the second coming of Christ.
3. The most popular premillennial penman of our day, Hal Lindsey, wrote:
  - a. "The Bible shows us that the Roman Empire will be revived shortly before the return of Jesus Christ to the earth" (Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 222).
  - b. Lindsey also admits that the fourth beast in Daniel, chapter seven is Rome.
    - 1) He says "Phase 1" was the old Roman Empire.
    - 2) "Phase 2" will be the revived Roman Empire which is even now being formed in Europe" (The Late Great Planet Earth, pp. 90-92).
4. Will old pagan Rome, which persecuted the church in its infancy, be revived before Christ comes again? What does the Bible say?

#### **Discussion:**

- I. **DOES DANIEL 2 TEACH THAT ONLY FOUR KINGDOMS WOULD COME BEFORE THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST WAS ESTABLISHED?**
  - A. Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of a great image.
    1. Its head of gold represented Babylon (Daniel 2:37,38).

2. Its breast and arms of silver represented the Medo-Persian Empire which conquered Babylon (Daniel 2:39).
  3. A third kingdom, Greece, was represented by the belly and thighs of bronze (Daniel 2:39).
  4. Then a fourth kingdom represented by the legs and feet of iron and clay would arise (Daniel 2:40-43).
    - a. This fourth kingdom was Rome.
    - b. No mention is made of a fifth kingdom!
    - c. No meaning is given to the toes except the fact that they were of iron and clay "so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile."
- B. Premillennialists apparently believe the image had the longest toes in history.
1. Through the centuries various world empires were said to be revived Rome.
    - a. Charlemagne's French empire in the ninth century.
    - b. Napoleon's European empire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
    - c. Hitler's Third Reich in Germany during World War II.
  2. Today, the European Common Market is the favorite choice of most premillennialists for revived Rome.
    - a. "On January 1, 1993 Western Europe became a single economic market linking 345 million people in 12 nations and eliminating tariff and customs barriers" (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., 219).
    - b. "In phase 2 of the fourth kingdom Rome will be in the form of a ten nation confederacy. Therefore we can expect two nations to withdraw from the Common Market or we can expect some mergers of nations" (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., 223).

- c. "A generation ago, no one could have dreamed that an empire formed of the nations that were part of old Rome could possibly be revived. But today, as Europe is on the advent of real unity, we see the potential fulfillment of another vital prophecy leading to the return of Jesus Christ" (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 221).
- C. Is the premillennial contention true? Do the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image symbolize a ten nation confederacy which will constitute a revival of Rome?
  - 1. Daniel said: "In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom." He did **not** say, "After the days of these kings."
  - 2. If the prophecy of Daniel 2:44 was not completely fulfilled in the days of the Roman kings when the church was established, then prophecy failed and the Bible is not true!
- D. Foy E. Wallace, Jr.'s discussion of the toes totally annihilates the premillennial contention: "But it is argued that the image of Nebuchadnezzar had ten toes, which represented the ten kingdoms, in addition to the four kingdoms of the image proper. The four kingdoms part of the prophecy was fulfilled and the body of the image was destroyed - but the toes survived the destruction, still exist, to revive in the future! Some toes they are! The body of the image was only about 600 years long, but the toes according to that picture are already 2000 years longer than the body. Magic toes! The toes of that fellow could be coiled around his body ten times and could still scratch the back of its neck with its toe nails! And these toes lived two thousand years detached from the body! Such an argument is obviously a forced explanation to escape the complete New Testament fulfillment of Daniel's kingdom prophecy. The text says the image was "crushed" - not all but its toes.

"It says the image was crushed - which cannot mean other than the whole image. If a man is pronounced dead, it would not mean all but his toes! The fact that Daniel himself made no such application of 'the toes' is the proof that the toes were not distinguished from the image. On the contrary, he said the image was smitten on its feet, the last of the four kingdoms in its weakness, and crushed. The simple truth, therefore, is that Daniel saw only four world kingdoms, and since the kingdom of God should be set up 'in the days of these kings' it follows that the kingdom had to come while the Caesars were ruling, and before the Roman Empire ceased" (God's Prophetic Word, p. 170).

## **II. DOES DANIEL 7 TEACH THAT ONLY FOUR KINGDOMS WOULD COME BEFORE THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST?**

- A. Daniel 7 is a parallel passage to Daniel 2.
  - 1. Daniel 2 prophesied of the rise of four world empires which were represented by four different parts of an image.
  - 2. In the time of the fourth empire, God would set up His kingdom which would stand forever.
  - 3. Daniel 7 speaks of exactly the same thing except four “beasts” are used to represent the four empires.
- B. Daniel saw four beasts come up from the sea (Daniel 7:1-8).
  - 1. The sea refers to the nations - these “beasts” would arise out of the struggle and turmoil of nations.
  - 2. The first beast, which was like a lion and had eagle’s wings, represented Babylon (Daniel 7:4).
    - a. A lion is savage.
    - b. Wings indicate the speed with which Babylon arose to supremacy among the nations.
  - 3. The second beast, which was like a bear, and had three ribs in its mouth, represented Medo-Persia (Daniel 7:5).
    - a. A bear is also very savage and has great strength.
    - b. The three ribs denote the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt which all fell to the Medes and Persians.
  - 4. The third beast, which was like a leopard, represented the Greek (Macedonian) Empire established by Alexander the Great (Daniel 7:6).
    - a. Just as a leopard is very swift so Alexander established a great empire in a very short period of time.
    - b. The four heads represent the four divisions of the empire after the death of Alexander.

5. The fourth beast, which was exceedingly terrible, represented Rome (Daniel 7:7).
    - a. Rome was the strongest militarily of any of the four empires.
    - b. Rome, like this beast, was the most diverse of the four empires.
- C. What about the ten horns (Daniel 7:7,8, 15-27)?
1. Premillennialists say the ten horns refer to a ten nation confederacy which is even now being fulfilled in the European Common Market.
  2. They say the little horn which came up before whom three horns fell is the Antichrist (Hal Lindsey, The Late, Great Planet Earth, pp. 91-97).
  3. Daniel 7:24 tells us the ten heads represent ten kings.
  4. Some conservative scholars understand that ten is used to denote completeness and therefore the ten horns refer to kingdoms which existed during the beast's history (Edward Young, The Prophecy of Daniel, pp. 159, 160).
  5. Other conservative commentators believe the ten horns refer to ten emperors of Rome:
    - a. "...there is the distinct possibility that Pompey was the first of the ten horns of that terrible beast, and thus of the following order: (1) Pompey, 63 B.C.; (2) Julius Caesar, 47-44 B.C.; (3) Augustus Caesar, 27 B.C. - A.D. 14; (4) Tiberius Caesar, A.D. 14-37; (5) Caligula Caesar, A.D. 37-41; (6) Claudius Caesar, A.D. 41-54; (7) Nero Caesar, A.D. 54-58; (8) Galba, A.D. 68- 69; (9) Otho, A.D. 69; (10) Vitellius, A.D. 69. If such an arrangement can be justified, the eleventh ruler would be Vespasian, who ruled A.D. 69 - 79" (Rex Turner, Sr. Daniel: A Prophet of God, p. 115)
    - b. Beginning the line of emperors with Pompey and including Julius Caesar is highly questionable historically, for neither man is acknowledged as an emperor; the line of emperors began with Augustus Caesar; if one begins with Augustus, then Titus is the tenth ruler and Domitian, who unleashed the persecution of A.D. 95, would be the little horn who

“made war against the saints and prevailed against them...”  
(See Turner, p. 120).

### **Conclusion:**

1. Daniel, chapters two and seven, have already been fulfilled.
  - a. They were both fulfilled in the coming of the kingdom of Christ during the days when Rome ruled the world.
  - b. A prophecy once fulfilled can not be made to be fulfilled again and again.
2. The feet and legs of Nebuchadnezzar’s image and the fourth beast of Daniel’s vision both represent Rome:
  - a. Neither the Bible nor history knows anything of “Phase 1” and “Phase 2” of Rome!
  - b. The number of toes of the image is not given nor is there any special significance attached to them.
  - c. Neither the Third Reich, the European Common Market or any other government or confederacy is, or will be, a revival of the Roman Empire!
3. The kingdom has come; Christ is now reigning on His throne in heaven and will continue to reign until He comes again, raises the dead and delivers the kingdom **back** to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. According to dispensationalists, why did Christ fail to set up His kingdom at His first coming?
2. What, according to dispensationalists, did Christ set up as a temporary measure in place of the kingdom?
3. What does Hal Lindsey claim will be “Phase 2” of the Roman Empire?
4. How many earthly kingdoms are prophesied in Daniel, chapter two?
5. What, according to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, was going to happen in the days of the fourth kingdom?

6. How many kingdoms are prophesied by the four beasts in Daniel, chapter seven?
7. How many rulers would arise during the fourth kingdom?
8. Refute the idea that the "ten" toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image are ten kingdoms.
9. What were the four parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and what did each represent?
10. What were the four beasts of Daniel's vision, and what did each of them represent?
11. What are some of the empires in history which were thought by some to be the revived Roman Empire?
12. What does Hal Lindsey and many present day premillennialists say is the revived Roman Empire?
13. How many toes does Nebuchadnezzar's image have?
14. Where does the Bible speak of "Phase 1" and "Phase 2" of the Roman Empire?
15. When will Christ deliver the kingdom back to God the Father?





## LESSON X:

### ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE ANTICHRIST?

#### Introduction:

1. Who is the Antichrist?
  - a. Has he already come?
  - b. Is he even now beginning his spectacular rise to world leadership?
  - c. Can he be identified with a president, prime minister, dictator or diplomat now on the world stage?
2. Premillennialists tell us the Antichrist, a great, evil, charismatic world ruler, is even now among us and will soon be revealed.
  - a. “Today, the man who will command this economic and military colossus is alive and well on planet Earth” (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 235).
  - b. “And heading up this 10 nation confederacy will be a man of such magnetism and power he will become the greatest dictator the world has ever known. He will be the Antichrist” (Hal Lindsey, Planet Earth-2000 A.D., p. 223).
  - c. “The time is ripe and getting riper for the Great Dictator, the one we call ‘the Future Fuehrer.’ This is the one who is predicted in the Scriptures very clearly and called the ‘Antichrist’” (Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 103).
3. Are the speculations of the premillennialists about an evil, end-time emperor of the world really true? What does the Bible say?

#### Discussion:

#### I. WHAT DO PREMILLENNIALISTS SAY ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST?

- A. Several leaders, past and present, have been proclaimed the Antichrist.
  1. Benito Mussolini, the leader of the Fascist regime in Italy during World War II.
  2. Adolph Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany in World War II.

3. Joseph Stalin, once the Communist leader of the Soviet Union.
  4. Nikita Krushchev who followed Stalin as the leader of Russia.
  5. Fidel Castro, Communist leader of Cuba.
  6. Henry Kissinger, US Secretary of State under President Nixon.
  7. Saddam Hussein, once the radical Moslem dictator of Iraq.
- B. Hal Lindsey, today's most prolific premillennial penman, describes the Anti-christ very graphically:
1. He is to be identified with the beast of Revelation 13 and the eleventh horn in Daniel 7:23,24.
  2. "He will be worshiped as Satan is worshiped, with forms of idolatry that we can only guess in our wildest leaps of imagination" (The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 107).
  3. The Antichrist will deify himself, demand to be worshiped, and establish himself in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem as predicted in 2 Thessalonians, chapter two according to Lindsey (The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 109,110).
  4. The Antichrist will have a seemingly fatal wound, but will make a miraculous recovery which will be seen as a resurrection from the dead. This will cause him to be regarded as a supernatural being (The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 108).
  5. "The world will receive this man as the answer to all its problems. He will have superhuman intelligence and abilities that will mesmerize people. He will be followed blindly as a benevolent Messiah figure" (Planet Earth - 2000 A.D., p. 243).

## II. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST?

- A. The word "antichrist" occurs only five times in the Bible in four passages:
1. **1 John 2:18:** "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come."
  2. **1 John 2:22:** "Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son."

3. **1 John 4:3:** “And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Anti-christ, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”
  4. **2 John 7:** “For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”
- B. From the four passages above, we learn the following:
1. There is not one, but many antichrists.
  2. The antichrist is one who denies that Jesus is the Christ and that Christ has come in the flesh.
  3. The antichrist was already present in John’s day.
- C. John was refuting the Gnostic heresy which invaded the Lord’s church near the end of the first century.
1. Gnostics claimed to have special knowledge which was superior to that of other Christians.
  2. They believed all physical matter, including human flesh, was evil.
  3. Because of this view of matter, they denied that Christ, one of the Godhead, could have come in a human body.
    - a. Some Gnostics, known as Docetics, said that Christ did not actually have a body; He only **seemed** to have one.
    - b. Other Gnostics, known as Cerinthians, said “the Christ” came upon the man Jesus at His baptism and left Him before He was crucified.
  4. These false teachers were “anti” (against) the truth of who Jesus is and what He taught.

### III. WHO IS THE MAN OF SIN?

- A. Premillennialists associate the “man of sin” in Second Thessalonians, chapter two with their view of the antichrist.
- B. One must keep the passage in context.

1. The “man of sin” is mentioned only in 2 Thessalonians and is nowhere associated with the antichrists who are mentioned by John.
2. Paul established the church at Thessalonica on his second missionary journey, but had to leave after a short time because of severe persecution (Acts 17:1-10).
3. He must have taught about the second coming of Christ at Thessalonica because of the hope it gives to Christians.
4. Some apparently misunderstood Paul’s teaching and thought that those Christians who had died before the Lord came back would lose their reward; Paul corrected this error in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11.
5. Others also had the misunderstanding that the coming of Christ was imminent so they had quit their jobs and were living off others (1 Thessalonians 2:9; 4:11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12).
6. Paul corrected this error by pointing out the second coming of Christ was **not** imminent because a great falling away from the faith and the revealing of the man of sin must happen before the second coming (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12).

C. Let us now look at Paul’s description of the man of sin.

1. Three different designations are used:
  - a. The man of sin.
  - b. The lawless one.
  - c. The son of perdition.
2. Never does Paul call the man of sin “the Antichrist!”
3. Please note what else Paul says:
  - a. The man of sin opposes, and exalts himself above God and all that is worshiped (2 Thessalonians 2:4).
  - b. He sits in the temple of God showing that he himself is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

- c. He will be slain by the Lord when He comes again (2 Thessalonians 2:8).
  - d. He will use power, signs, and lying wonders to deceive (2 Thessalonians 2:9).
  - e. Those who do not love the truth will accept and follow him (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).
- D. The great apostasy which resulted in the Roman Catholic Church and the rise of the papacy best fits Paul's prediction of the man of sin and the falling away.
  - 1. "From the time of the Protestant Reformation, the view proliferated that the Man of Sin was not a single individual, but a succession of men - the popes- and that the restraining power was the Roman Empire out of whose ruins the papacy arose" (Gary Workman, Studies in I, II Thessalonians, Philemon, p. 428).
  - 2. "...in the centuries which have passed since these words were penned, no character in history so nearly conforms in minute detail to the representation here given as the pope of Rome" (Guy N. Woods, Commentary on the Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude, p. 243).

#### IV. WHO IS THE BEAST WHOSE NUMBER IS 666?

- A. The beast of Revelation 13 is never called the Antichrist or the Man of Sin!
- B. The beast fits the description of the fourth beast in Daniel 7 which represented the Roman Empire (Daniel 7:7,8; Revelation 13:1,2).
  - 1. The beast is Rome which persecuted the Christians.
  - 2. During the days of Domitian, people were forced to burn incense to an image of the emperor as a sign of loyalty to the Empire.
  - 3. Christians could not do it for it would have been idolatry.
  - 4. Many were martyred by the Roman government because of their refusal.
  - 5. The "mark of the beast" was likely a brand, or some physical object, which was given to those who had paid homage to Domitian's image.

6. Without this “mark” from the Roman “beast,” Christians could not do business, and therefore would be prevented from earning a living.
- C. What is the meaning of 666?
1. The number of the beast (Rome - the persecuting power) is 666, “the number of a man” (Revelation 13:18).
  2. Six was the number used for mankind, humanity.
  3. It was one short of seven, which symbolized perfection.
  4. The repetition of the number three times intensifies it.
  5. Therefore, it is the number of a man who is very evil.
  6. Very likely, it referred to Domitian, the evil emperor who was responsible for the persecution of the Christians.
  7. Ray Summers said: “This string of sixes represented to the Christians everything that was distasteful, evil, terrible, and brutal. The persecuting Roman emperor with his forced diabolical emperor worship was that ‘everything.’ He was the ally of the devil in an attempt to destroy the Christians. If the number is to be applied to one man, it appears that Domitian, monster of sin, cruelty, and degradation fulfilled that role” ( Worthy is the Lamb, pp. 177, 178).

### **Conclusion:**

1. Premillennialists predict the rise of a great, charismatic, but evil, world ruler before the second advent of Christ.
2. They claim this ruler is the antichrist spoken of in First and Second John and the man of sin mentioned in Second Thessalonians, chapter two.
3. They also equate this evil ruler with the beast of Revelation, chapter thirteen.
4. The Bible does not teach the premillennial position:
  - a. The antichrists of John’s day were the Gnostics who denied that Christ had come in the flesh.
  - b. The man of sin best fits the papacy of the apostate Roman Catholic Church.

- c. The beast of Revelation is the Roman Empire of John's day and 666 is probably Domitian who persecuted the church.
5. One does not need to fear the "Antichrist," but should fear the false teachers who pervert the Scriptures and make false predictions (1 John 4:1).

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. According to premillennialists, how long will it be before the Antichrist comes?
2. What does Hal Lindsey call the Antichrist?
3. Who are some of the men who have been proclaimed to be the Antichrist?
4. With whom does Hal Lindsey identify the Antichrist?
5. How many times does "antichrist" appear in the Bible? In how many passages?
6. Where are the passages where "antichrist" appears?
7. How many antichrists are there?
8. According to John, who is the antichrist?
9. What heresy was John refuting?
10. What did the Gnostics teach about Jesus Christ?
11. What was the difference between Docetics and Cerinthians?
12. How many passages in the Bible mention the term "man of sin?"
13. What is the background of Paul's Second Thessalonian epistle?
14. What are three terms Paul uses to describe the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians?
15. Does Paul ever call the man of sin "the antichrist?"
16. What has been the common view of the identity of the man of sin since the Protestant Reformation?
17. Is the beast in Revelation 13 ever called "the man of sin" or "the antichrist" in the Bible?

18. Who is the beast?
19. What was the mark of the beast?
20. What did the number 6 represent in the ancient world?
21. To whom does 666 likely refer?
22. Who is the most prolific premillennial penman of our day?
23. What should we fear more than the antichrist?



## LESSON XI:

### ARE YOU READY FOR THE RAPTURE?

#### Introduction:

1. In a book entitled On Borrowed Time: 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Could Come in 1988, Edgar C. Whisenant predicted that Christ would return to rapture His saints on Tuesday, September 13, 1988 at 11:00 A.M. Central Daylight Time.
  - a. Christ did not come at the time predicted so Whisenant moved the date up to Wednesday, then Thursday and then Friday.
  - b. In an interview with Christianity Today magazine, this false prophet said: "The evidence is all over the place that it is going to be in a few days anyway."
  - c. Even though his predictions did not come to pass, Whisenant's book sold three million copies and made him a prophet who made a profit!
2. All of us have seen the bumper sticker which warns: "In the event of the Rapture, this car will be driverless."
  - a. Johnny Ramsey suggested that believers in the Rapture should not be licensed to drive for they pose a safety hazard to other drivers on our highways (Premillennialism: True or False, p. 188).
  - b. Hal Lindsey wrote in 1970: "Astounding as man's trip to the moon is, there is another trip which many men, women, and children will take some day which will leave the rest of the world gasping. Those who remain on earth at that time will use every invention of the human mind to explain the sudden disappearance of millions of people" (The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 135).
3. Will the righteous be "raptured" seven years before the final coming of the Lord?
4. Does the Bible really teach what the premillennialists are telling us about "the Rapture" or is it an invention of men?

#### Discussion:

##### I. WHAT IS THE RAPTURE?

- A. The theory of premillennialists is that Jesus will return secretly to snatch away the righteous immediately before a period of great tribulation.

1. When the Rapture occurs people will be going about their lives as usual.
  2. Suddenly, cars will have no drivers; chairs in schools, offices and waiting rooms will be vacant; seats on busses, trains and planes will be empty; workers will instantly and silently disappear from factory assembly lines; husbands, wives or children will disappear without a trace from their homes; and chaos will result as a frenzied search for the missing is carried out!
- B. The word “rapture” is **not even found in the Bible!**
1. It comes from the Latin “rapto” which means “to snatch away.”
  2. Our English word “rapture” simply refers to a state of being carried away with joy, love or ecstasy; it well describes the happiness faithful Christians will experience in heaven.
- C. The premillennial position on the Rapture involves several prominent points:
1. In the last days a great period of tribulation will take place on earth.
  2. Just before the Tribulation begins, the Lord will return secretly and snatch His saints away to heaven so they do not have to experience this time of trouble; the righteous dead will also be raised to be snatched away with the living saints - this will be the first resurrection.
  3. At the end of seven years, the Lord will return to the earth with His saints and intervene in the Battle of Armageddon thereby assuring victory for the forces of righteousness.
  4. The martyrs made during the Tribulation will be raised - the second resurrection - to join the saints who have returned from the Rapture.
  5. Christ will then reign for one thousand years in a glorious earthly kingdom - the millennium.
- D. Those who hold to the Rapture theory speak of two “stages” or “phases” of the second coming.
1. Jack Van Impe says: “Multitudes today are unaware that there are two stages or phases within the process of the Second Coming -

the Rapture and the Revelation - and that these two events are separated by a seven year period of time" (2001-On the Edge of Eternity, pp. 185,186).

2. Premillennialists contend that "the coming of the Lord" refers to the Rapture.
3. They say "the revelation of the Lord" refers to His coming at the end of the seven years of the Tribulation.
4. Three different Greek words are used for the Lord's coming:
  - a. **Parousia**: coming, presence, advent.
  - b. **Epiphaneia**: appearing, manifestation, brightness.
  - c. **Apocalupsis**: revealing, a revelation.
5. The premillennial position is that **parousia** pertains to the coming to rapture the saints; **Epiphaneia** and **apocalupsis** are supposed to refer to the "revelation" of Jesus with His saints at the end of the seven years Rapture/Tribulation period.
6. Dave Miller correctly points out that these three words are used inter-changeably to refer to the same coming of the Lord: "Dispensationalists assert that 'coming' (parousia) in 1 Thess. 4:15 and 2 Thess. 2:1 refer to the Rapture! Yet the same word is used in 1 Thess. 3:13 to speak of Jesus coming 'with' His saints and therefore coincides with the Dispensational concept of the 'Appearing' or 'Revelation' seven years after the 'Rapture.' Dispensationalists apply 2 Thess. 2:8 to the Antichrist and therefore must understand this as a reference to the 'Appearing.' Yet the verse uses the expression 'the manifestation' (i.e. 'brightness' - 'epiphaneia') of His coming (parousia)! Thus the term 'coming' is used in the N.T. to refer to both Dispensational concepts of the "Rapture" and the 'Appearing' and the two expressions are even combined in 2 Thess. 2:8 to refer to one and the same event" ("The Rapture," Biblical Truth Versus Dispensationalism, a series of sermons presented to the church of Christ in Dongola, IL, Winter 1983-84).

## II. THE PRINCIPAL PASSAGE USED BY PREMILLENNIALISTS AS PROOF OF THE RAPTURE IS FIRST THESSALONIANS 4:13-18.

- A. Paul was writing to reassure some of the saints who had the mistaken notion that Christians who had already died would lose their reward.

1. He says those who “sleep in Jesus” will come with the Lord when He returns (verse 14).
  2. He shows that the living saints will have no advantage over the dead for the dead saints will be raised before the living ascend to meet the Lord ( verses 15-17).
  3. When the saints all meet the Lord in the air, they will **always** be with Him - not just for seven years (verse 17).
- B. The question Paul answered concerned those who had died in the Lord.
1. Non-Christians are not under consideration in this context.
  2. The Bible teaches that **all** will be raised at the same time on the Last Day (John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15).

### III. THE BIBLE TEACHING OF THE SECOND COMING HAS NO ROOM FOR THE RAPTURE.

- A. Jesus is coming again (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11).
1. His coming will be sudden and unexpected (Matthew 24:42, 44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11).
  2. His coming will be seen and heard by everyone, living and dead (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7).
- B. When He comes, the dead will be raised and changed (John 5:28, 29; 6:54; 1 Corinthians 15:23-27, 35-55).
- C. The earth and the works in it will all be burned up ( Hebrews 1:10-12; 2 Peter 3:7-13).
- D. All who have ever lived will be judged by Christ (Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 17:30,31; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15).
1. The separation of good and evil will occur at the same time (Matthew 13:30-50; 25:31-46).
  2. The righteous will go to heaven (Matthew 25:34, 46; 1 Peter 1:3-5).
  3. The unrighteous will be cast into hell (Matthew 25:41,46; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-10).

## **Conclusion:**

1. Neither the word nor the concept of the “Rapture” is found in the Bible!
  - a. It is a theory of men, a part of the false teaching of premillennialism.
  - b. Saints will experience the true rapture when they get to heaven to be with the Lord forever and ever!
2. We do not need to worry about the so called Rapture, but we must prepare for the coming of the Lord to raise the dead, destroy the earth and judge all mankind.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. If the Rapture theory were true, why would it be unsafe for believers to drive?
2. What is the “Rapture” according to premillennialists?
3. How long is the Rapture supposed to last?
4. According to this theory, what will take place on the earth while the righteous are enjoying the Rapture?
5. What is the meaning of the word “rapture?”
6. When will faithful Christians truly experience rapture?
7. How many times is the word “rapture” found in the Bible?
8. What is the “first resurrection” according to premillennialists?
9. What is the “second resurrection” according to premillennialists?
10. According to premillennialists, what are the two “phases” of the second coming?
11. What are the Greek words used in reference to the second coming? What do they mean? Do they refer to different comings or the same coming?
12. What concern was Paul answering in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18?
13. When Jesus comes again, who will be aware of it?
14. When Jesus comes again, what will He do?

15. What is going to happen to the earth when the Lord comes again?
16. What should be our concern in regard to the second coming of Christ?

## LESSON XII:

### ARE YOU TROUBLED BY THE TRIBULATION?

#### Introduction:

1. Premillennialists commonly define “the last days” to mean the time immediately prior to the so-called “Rapture of the saints” and the beginning of seven years of great trouble on the earth known as the “Great Tribulation.”
  - a. In the New Testament, “the last days” is synonymous with the Christian Age (Acts 2:16,17; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2 Peter 3:3).
  - b. According to premillennialists, the Tribulation will be a time of indescribable suffering for the saints brought about by the Antichrist.
  - c. Classic premillennialists believe the church will go through the Tribulation, but dispensationalists maintain the church will be raptured during this troublesome time.
2. Premillennialists believe the Great Tribulation is a major teaching of the Word of God: “More space is devoted to it in the Old Testament than to the coming of Christ. Every New Testament writer refers to it. The Revelation is largely a description of its leading events...All nature is drawn upon to emphasize the terror of those years” (S. M. Coder, Great Doctrines of the Bible, p. 320, as quoted by Johnny Ramsey in Premillennialism, True or False, pp. 189,190).
3. What does the Bible teach about the Great Tribulation?
  - a. Will there be a period of intense suffering for the saints before the final appearing of the Lord?
  - b. Or, is this a doctrine of the devil contrived by the fertile imaginations of misguided men who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

#### Discussion:

##### I. WHAT IS THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

- A. By definition, tribulation simply means “a great misery or distress, as from oppression; deep sorrow; affliction.”
- B. The Bible already teaches that **all** saints in **all** ages will suffer tribulation.

1. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said those are blessed who are persecuted for righteousness sake (Matthew 5:10-12).
  2. In the Parable of the Sower, the Lord taught that the seed in the stony soil represented a hearer who "has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles" (Matthew 13:21).
  3. Jesus also warned His disciples: "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you... A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...." (John 15:18,20).
  4. Paul and Barnabas taught their converts "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).
  5. Paul wrote to Timothy: "Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).
  6. James wrote: "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience" (James 1:2,3).
  7. Peter told persecuted Christians that they should not "think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you" (1 Peter 4:12).
- C. Premillennialists argue that there will be a specific period of persecution and suffering brought on by the Antichrist and it will be unequalled by any suffering in history!
1. At the Rapture, the saints will be caught up to heaven for seven years.
  2. The Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel for seven years.
  3. All Jews will return to Palestine and rebuild the temple.
  4. After three and one half years, the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews and turn on them in great fury.
  5. One hundred, forty four thousand Jews will be converted during this time and will become zealous preachers: "They are going to be 144,000 Jewish Billy Graham turned loose on this earth - the earth



will never know a period of evangelism like this period” (Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth, p. 111).

6. The brunt of the Great Tribulation will be against the Jews for the saints will have been raptured prior to the Tribulation and the nominal Christians left on earth will be allied with the Antichrist.
7. The Great Tribulation will end at “the revelation” of the Lord at the battle of Armageddon.

## **II. SEVERAL PASSAGES ARE MISAPPLIED TO PROVIDE PROOF FOR THE TRIBULATION THEORY.**

- A. Matthew 24 is the main place Tribulation advocates seek proof for their theory.
  1. We have already learned that Jesus answered two basic questions in Matthew 24:
    - a. What will be the sign of His coming in judgment on Jerusalem?
    - b. What will be the sign of His second coming and of the end of the world?
  2. We learned that many signs were given to show the approaching end of Jerusalem, but none were given for the end of the world.
  3. We also learned that verse 36 marks a definite transition.
  4. Verses 8-13 and 21 and 22 are key verses used by Tribulation advocates:
    - a. These verses simply describe the siege of Jerusalem.
    - b. More than one million died in the siege.
    - c. Starvation was so severe mothers ate their own children.
    - d. Nearly 100,000 survivors were sold into slavery.
    - e. Josephus, an eyewitness wrote: “Neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries...from the beginning of the world” (Wars of the Jews , V. 10:5).

- f. Jesus made it clear that His prophecies of this great tribulation would be fulfilled in the lifetime of the generation then living: “Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (Matthew 24:34).
- B. Premillennialists believe the main message of Revelation is the Great Tribulation:
  - 1. We must remember three things about Revelation:
    - a. It is written in symbolic language (Revelation 1:1).
    - b. It mainly concerns events “which must shortly take place” from the standpoint of the first century readers (Revelation 1:1).
    - c. The background of Revelation is a time of persecution which took place about A.D. 95 during the reign of the evil emperor, Domitian.
  - 2. Dispensationalists believe chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation describe the raptured saints in heaven and chapters 6 through 18 describe the Great Tribulation.
    - a. They err because they do not consider the historical background nor the type of language it is written in.
    - b. Their approach is that of eisegesis - reading into the text pre-conceived ideas, rather than exegesis - bringing out the meaning which is in the text.
- C. Premillennialists also use many passages from the Old Testament in an effort to prove the Tribulation theory.
  - 1. “The time of Jacob’s trouble” is believed to be a prophecy of the Tribulation (Jeremiah 30:7).
    - a. The prophet is speaking to the residents of Jerusalem during the siege by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
    - b. It was a time of great suffering for Jacob’s descendants, the people of Israel.

- c. in the same chapter, the prophet describes the return from captivity.
- 2. Ezekiel, chapters 36-39 is a prominent passage used by premillennialists:
  - a. Ezekiel is with the Jews who have been carried into Babylon because of their rebellion against God.
  - b. He foretold the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; this was fulfilled in 586 BC.
  - c. He then foretold the return from captivity and the rebuilding of the temple; this was fulfilled beginning in 536 BC.
  - d. He pointed out that God would punish the nations who had oppressed His people.
  - e. The coming of the kingdom (church) is also seen.
- 3. Daniel, chapter 11, is badly perverted by premillennialists.
  - a. In chapters 2 and 7, Daniel foretold a succession of four world empires, one of which was Greece (Macedonian).
  - b. In chapter 11, the prophet especially deals with the Greek Empire because of the impact it would have on God's people, Israel.
  - c. The mighty king mentioned in 11:3 is Alexander, founder of this empire.
  - d. Verse 4 describes the division of Alexander's kingdom among his four generals: Lysimachus, Antipator, Seleucus I and Ptolemy I, following his untimely death.
  - e. The "king of the north" refers to Seleucus who ruled the area north of Palestine.
  - f. The "king of the south" referred to the leader of Egypt which was south of Palestine.
  - g. Because Palestine was between these rival rulers, it often became a battleground for the clashing armies.

- h. Premillennialists ignore the context and make the “king of the north” to refer to a future Russian leader.
  - i. This passage was fulfilled long ago and has nothing to do with any future battle or kingdom (See Stafford North, Armageddon When? pp. 18-20).
- 4. Daniel 12 is also used by premillennialists to support their theory of the Great Tribulation.
  - 1. Historically, the passage was fulfilled in the invasion of Palestine by the armies of the Antiochus Epiphanes IV.
  - 2. Antiochus killed many priests, slew thousands of Jews and defiled the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar.
  - 3. Albert Barnes describes Antiochus as “the most bitter and bloody enemy which ever rose up against the Jewish nation and their worship” (Daniel, p. 273).
  - 4. The persecution lasted for “three and a half years” until Judas Maccabeus led a successful revolt and drove Antiochus’ forces out.
  - 5. The apocryphal book of First Maccabees says concerning Antiochus and his army: “They shed innocent blood around the sanctuary, and defiled the holy place; and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled away; the sanctuary thereof was made desolate; her fears were turned into mourning” (1:37-39).

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. The premillennial doctrine of the Great Tribulation is based upon a false interpretation of numerous Scriptures which are taken out of context.
- 2. It will be the lot of every faithful child of God to endure some persecution during his lifetime; it has always been so.
- 3. We can overcome all our trials through Jesus Christ (Romans 8:31-39)!
- 4. Johnny Ramsey aptly observed: “One reason members of the Lord’s church know so little about the rapture and the tribulation is that the Bible does not mention the matter. They are the result of man’s vivid imagination and the

intricate weavings of denominational dogmas” (Premillennialism, True or False, p. 185).

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How do premillennialists define “the last days?”
2. How do dispensationalists and classic premillennialists differ in regard to the Tribulation?
3. What is the definition of “tribulation?”
4. How many believers in Christ will suffer persecution according to Paul?
5. Who mainly will feel the brunt of the Antichrist’s fury during the Great Tribulation according to premillennialists?
6. What event is supposed to bring the Great Tribulation to an end?
7. What is the key New Testament chapter for advocates of the Tribulation theory?
8. What are the two basic questions Jesus is answering in Matthew 24?
9. To what event does the tribulation mentioned in Matthew 24 refer?
10. What are three things we must remember about the book of Revelation?
11. Who is the mighty king mentioned in Daniel 11?
12. Who is the king of the north? the king of the south?



## LESSON XIII:

### ARE YOU ANXIOUS ABOUT ARMAGEDDON?

#### Introduction:

1. Whenever preachers, poets, philosophers or politicians want to frighten us with dire predictions of coming catastrophe, they speak of Armageddon.
2. “Armageddon” conjures up in the minds of many a dark image of death and destruction, of madness and mayhem such as no other word can.
3. Just what is the “Battle of Armageddon” which we hear about so much?
  - a. Is it the “mother of all battles,” the “war to end all wars?”
  - b. Will it unleash the forces of evil and pit them against the forces of righteousness in one great, final showdown at the end of human history?
  - c. Or, is Armageddon merely a symbol to describe any spiritual battle faced by the children of God?
4. What does the Bible really teach about Armageddon?

#### Discussion:

#### I. WHAT DO DISPENSATIONALISTS TEACH ABOUT ARMAGEDDON?

- A. In 1970, Hal Lindsey wrote “. . . we have shown the predicted powers that would arise shortly before the return of Jesus Christ and how these powers are simultaneously developing in current history. We have outlined how world conditions in this generation (underline mine - RR) are launched into a countdown that will end in the final collapse of man’s efforts to run the world without God” (The Late Great Planet Earth, p.150).
- B. The premillennial program leading up to Armageddon contains the following sequence of events as outlined by Hal Lindsey, the foremost dispensational writer of our day (See The Late Great Planet Earth, pp. 151-168):
  1. The Antichrist will become head of the revived Roman Empire which will grow out of the European Common Market.
  2. He will make a covenant with the Jews to guarantee their safety; this event will mark the beginning of the seven year countdown to the Battle of Armageddon.

3. After three and one half years pass, the Antichrist will begin to persecute believers in Christ and will break his covenant with Israel.
4. The Antichrist will then enthrone himself in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and demand to be worshiped as God.
5. An Arab-African confederacy led by Egypt will invade Israel.
6. Russia and its allies will then invade and conquer the Middle East but will only be able to hold it for a short time.
7. An Asian alliance of nations led by Communist China will field an army of two hundred million men and march toward Israel; ostensibly they are going to support the Antichrist, but actually they will turn against him.
8. God will rain down fire and brimstone on Russia (probably nuclear warfare, opines Lindsey) and annihilate them completely.
9. With the Arab-African alliance having been defeated by Russia, and Russia having been eliminated by nuclear power, the Asian alliance remains to fight the Antichrist and his forces.
10. These two massive armies ( the Asian army has 200 million men) will meet on an ancient battlefield in Israel known as Armageddon where the final battle for control of this world will take place.
11. Lindsey describes the battle scene as follows: "So here it is - the last great conflict. After the Antichrist assembles the forces of the rest of the whole world together, they meet the onrushing charge of the kings of the East in a battle line which will extend throughout Israel with the vortex centered at the Valley of Megiddo" (p. 165).
12. The fighting will spread to the whole world; major cities such as London, Paris, Tokyo and New York will be wiped off the map and entire islands in the ocean will be destroyed.
13. Then "as the battle of Armageddon reaches its awful climax and it appears that all life will be destroyed on earth - in that very moment Jesus Christ will return and save man from self-extinction" (p. 168).



## II. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REALLY SAY ABOUT ARMAGEDDON?

- A. Armageddon refers to a valley or plain which runs northwest to southeast along the foot of Mt. Carmel.
1. A fortified city on a hill guarding the entrance to the area in ancient times was called Megiddo and the plain was sometimes known as the valley of Megiddo.
  2. The area was also called “the Plain of Esdraelon.”
  3. The plain is approximately 20 miles long and 14 miles wide; it is joined to the Jordan Valley by the Valley of Jezreel which is 10 miles long and 3 miles wide.
  4. The plain was a natural gateway through the central mountains of Palestine and provided a connection between the coastal route from Egypt to the major arteries leading to the cities of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley; this was a natural location for armies to meet in battle as ancient superpowers from the north such as Babylonia and Assyria struggled for supremacy against Egypt in the south.
- B. Some of the most decisive battles in Israel’s history were fought in this small area.
1. Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera and Jabin’s army here (see Judges 4 and 5).
  2. Here Gideon with 300 men defeated a vastly larger army of Midianites (Judges 7).
  3. Saul and Jonathan died here on Mt. Gilboa while fighting the Philistines (1 Samuel 31).
  4. King Ahaziah was killed in battle near Megiddo (2 Kings 9:27).
  5. Good King Josiah was slain here as he fought against the forces of Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23).
  6. Because so many battles were fought at, or near Megiddo, the very name “Megiddo” came to stand for a battle or conflict whether physical or spiritual.

- a. The Battle of Waterloo where the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon changed the history of Europe.
  - b. “He met his Waterloo” has become a phrase used to describe anyone having a difficult battle in life, whether spiritual or otherwise.
- C. The actual word “Armageddon” appears only once in all the Bible (Revelation 16:12-16).
  - 1. “The passage does speak of a gathering for war at a place called Armageddon, but that is about all. All the details in Lindsey’s scenario he gets from his interpretation of other passages which do not mention Armageddon at all but which, he says, are related” (Stafford North, Armageddon When? p. 89).
  - 2. A hodgepodge of passages in the Old Testament prophets are taken out of context to support the premillennial idea of Armageddon; most of these passages have to do with the captivities and return from captivity of Israel and Judah.
  - 3. Please note the following reasons Revelation 16:16 is not to be understood literally:
    - a. The book of Revelation was given in “signs” (Revelation 1:1).
    - b. The dragon represented Satan (Revelation 12:9; 20:2).
    - c. The seven headed beast represented Rome, Satan’s instrument to persecute the people of God (Revelation 13).
    - d. The false prophet was the arm of the Roman government which enforced emperor worship.
  - 4. “The passage suggests a marshaling of forces to help the Empire and the cult of Emperor worship. These things happen after the pouring out of a sixth bowl of wrath or punishment. All six of these bowls (16:2-16) suggest punishment directed against the Roman Empire because of its persecution of Christians. . . Jesus describes the fall of Rome, often using symbols taken from the plagues on Egypt” (Stafford North, Armageddon When? p. 91).

## **Conclusion:**

1. Ray Summers succinctly sums up the Scripture teaching on the Battle of Armageddon: "The Armageddon in the book of Revelation has no location on the maps of the world; it is logical, not spatial. The battle is not one in which material, physical armaments will decide the issue; the battle is between righteousness and evil, and righteousness is the certain victor" (Worthy is the Lamb, pp. 189,190).
2. Revelation is written in highly figurative language.
3. It was written to Christians who were being persecuted by the Roman government because they refused to burn incense to an image of the emperor.
4. The Lord comforted His people by showing in a series of visions that Satan was behind the persecution and that he and his allies, the emperor and his government, would go down in dismal defeat!
5. The great message to God's people in all ages is that we are "more than conquerors" through Christ who loves us and died for us!

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Where is "Armageddon" located?
2. How large is the Plain of Esdraelon (or Valley of Megiddo)?
3. What are the decisive battles in Israel's history which were fought there?
4. How many times does the word "Armageddon" appear in the Bible?
5. When Hal Lindsey wrote the Late Great Planet Earth in 1970, when did he say Armageddon would take place?
6. What, according to Lindsey, is the sequence of events leading up to Armageddon?
7. Whose armies, according to dispensationalists, will be engaged in Armageddon?
8. How many soldiers will be in the army of the Asian alliance led by China?
9. Who, according to premillennialists, will intervene to determine the outcome of Armageddon?

10. How many nations will finally be involved in the Battle of Armageddon according to Hal Lindsey?
11. What do we mean when we say "He met his Waterloo?"
12. Prove that Revelation 16:12-16 is a figurative passage.
13. What really is "the Battle of Armageddon?"
14. What is the great message of Revelation to God's people in all ages?

## **LESSON XIV:**

### **WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE MILLENNIUM?**

#### **Introduction:**

1. According to premillennialists, when Christ returns to this earth He will make Jerusalem the political and religious capital of the world.
  - a. Every person on earth will make an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship at the rebuilt temple.
  - b. Jesus will supervise the rebuilding of the world which will be in ruins as a result of Armageddon.
  - c. There will be no armies for universal peace will prevail.
  - d. Weather will be controlled so that droughts, storms and floods will never occur.
  - e. Wild animals will become harmless and meat- eating animals will become vegetarians.
  - f. There will be no need for doctors, dentists or hospitals for all disease and sickness will be eradicated.
  - g. A one hundred year old person will be thought of as a child because people will live so long.
2. Premillennialists tell us that these ideal conditions will continue for a literal one thousand years while Satan is bound.
  - a. At the end of the millennium, Satan will be released for a short time.
  - b. Because man will still have his “old sinful nature,” Satan will be able to entice some to join him in a rebellion against the righteous rule of Christ.
  - c. The Lord will put down the rebellion swiftly and cast Satan and his rebels into Hell.
  - d. All mortals will be made immortal and the saints will be settled in a home in the new heavens and new earth.
3. Premillennialists believe that the above scenario is taught in Revelation 20.

- a. This chapter is the foundation of the whole premillennial program.
  - b. It is the only place in the entire Bible where the millennium is mentioned.
  - c. If it can be shown that this chapter does not teach an earthly reign of Christ for 1,000 literal years, then the whole theory of premillennialism is proved false.
4. What does Revelation 20:1-10 really teach?

### **Discussion:**

#### **I. REVELATION 20 MUST BE UNDERSTOOD IN CONTEXT.**

- A. We must remember that Revelation is written in a highly figurative form of speech known as apocalyptic language (for a full discussion of this see Ray Summers, Worthy is the Lamb ).
- B. Figurative language is found throughout the entire book.
  - 1. It was given in “signs” {symbols, figures} (Revelation 1:1).
  - 2. Some examples of the figures in Revelation are:
    - a. Christ’s eyes were “like a flame of fire” (1:14).
    - b. A “sharp two-edged sword came out of His mouth” (1:16).
    - c. He held seven stars {angels, messengers} in His right hand (1:16,20).
    - d. He was standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands {churches} (1:12,13, 20).
    - e. Satan is said to be a “red dragon with seven heads and ten horns” (12:3,9).
    - f. Why should chapter 20 be understood literally when the rest of the book must be understood figuratively?
- C. Two rules for understanding figurative language must be remembered:
  - 1. Figurative passages must always be understood in the light of literal passages.

2. Any interpretation of a difficult passage which contradicts the plain teaching of a simple passage cannot be correct.
- D. We must also remember that Revelation deals with things which “must shortly take place” (1:1).
1. John was told the time was near (1:3).
  2. John was writing to persecuted saints in A.D. 95 who were suffering and dying because they refused to worship the emperor by burning incense to his image.
  3. What comfort would the saints receive if they were told that two thousand years later there would be a restoration of the Jews to Israel, the temple would be rebuilt, a personal Antichrist would arise, and a bloody battle called Armageddon would be fought? They needed comfort right then!

## **II. WHAT DOES REVELATION 20 REALLY TEACH?**

- A. The following sequence of events is given in Revelation 20:1-10:
1. An angel comes from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a chain in his hand.
  2. He binds the old dragon, Satan, and casts him into the pit where he must remain for 1,000 years.
  3. At the end of the thousand years, Satan is released for a little while.
  4. The souls who have been beheaded are on thrones reigning and judging with Christ; this will continue for 1,000 years.
  5. At the end of the thousand years, the rest of the dead are raised.
  6. Those who had part in the first resurrection would not suffer the second death.
  7. When Satan is released at the end of the thousand years, he and Gog and Magog war against the saints and the beloved city.
  8. God will destroy Satan and His rebels with fire from heaven.

9. At last the devil is cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet have already been put.
- B. What do these events mean to us?
1. There are several essential items missing for this to refer to a millennial reign of Christians on earth with Jesus Christ:
    - a. The second coming of Christ is not mentioned.
    - b. The resurrection of the body is not mentioned.
    - c. A reign **on earth** is not mentioned.
    - d. Neither Jerusalem nor Palestine is mentioned.
    - e. The literal throne of David is not mentioned.
    - f. **We** Christians today are not mentioned (please note that it is “they” not “we” who reigned).
    - g. Christ on earth is not mentioned.
  2. “A theory which rests on a passage of Scripture in which not one of its peculiar tenets of doctrine is found cannot be true” (Homer Hailey, Commentary on Revelation, p.390).
  3. The items in this scene are not to be taken literally.
    - a. The theme of Revelation 20 is not the earthly reign of Christ, but victory over Satan who was the instigator of the Roman persecution against the church of Christ.
    - b. Revelation 20 sets forth the reign of Christ in heaven with His martyred saints.
  4. The key, chain and bottomless pit show that Satan’s power to deceive the nations and persuade them to persecute God’s people will be restricted.
  5. The thousand years is a number made up of multiples of ten which symbolize completeness; it shows that the triumph of God’s kingdom over the Devil, who instigated the Roman persecution, will continue for an extended period of time.



6. The thrones represent the victory of the martyred saints; they had been judged and killed by Rome; now they are reigning with Christ and participating in His judgment upon Rome.
7. Satan's being loosed for a little time means that the limitations on his ability to persecute the church will be lifted for a brief period of time.
8. The souls of those who were beheaded are those who were killed because they refused to worship the emperor; please note that they were **disembodied souls**, not resurrected bodies; this indicates it was before the resurrection for then all will be raised and changed (see 1 Corinthians 15:20-55).
9. The first resurrection is the resurrection of the cause of Christ which appeared to be near extinction because of the persecution, but now is victorious; in chapter 6, the souls were under the altar, but now they are on thrones (Revelation 6:9-11).
10. Gog and Magog represent the enemies of God's people; in Ezekiel 38, Gog probably referred to Antiochus Epiphanes and Magog to his people, but here the reference is to the enemies of the church of Christ.
11. The "beloved city" is the church of Christ where true spiritual worship is carried on (John 4:20-24; Galatians 6:16; Hebrews 13:15).
12. The second death is eternal separation from God in Hell, the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).

### III. **CHRIST WILL NOT BEGIN TO REIGN IN THE FUTURE; HE IS REIGNING NOW!**

- A. God promised that Christ would rule on David's throne (2 Samuel 7:12, 13).
  1. The angel repeated this promise to Mary (Luke 1:32,33).
  2. Peter said the promise was fulfilled on Pentecost (Acts 2:30-33).
  3. Christ has all authority now (Matthew 28:18).
  4. He is even now "the King of kings and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15).

5. He is ruling right now and will continue to rule until the dead are raised at His coming (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).
6. Zechariah foretold that Christ would be a priest on His throne (Zechariah 6:12,13).
  - a. Christ could not be a priest on earth because He was not from the priestly tribe (Hebrews 7:13,14).
  - b. Christ is now our High Priest in heaven (Hebrews 4:14-16).
  - c. Therefore, He is now reigning on His throne in heaven.

**B. Satan is bound now.**

1. Satan's power was limited by the death of Christ on the cross (Genesis 3:15; John 12:31; 1 Corinthians 15:54-56; Hebrews 2:14,15; 1 John 3:8).
2. Christians can limit Satan's influence on them by "putting on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:10-18).
3. "The binding of Satan . . . means that his work will be restrained in a certain realm; but this binding does not put an end to all his diabolical activities" (Hardeman Nichols, Premillennialism, True or False, p. 262).
4. Satan's final and complete overthrow will be at the Judgment when he will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10; Matthew 25:41).

**Conclusion:**

1. Ray Summers correctly concludes that "the overthrow of Satan, and not the reign of a thousand years, is the main theme of the first ten verses of this chapter" (Worthy is the Lamb, p. 202).
2. Revelation 20 show that even Satan is under God's control.
  - a. The "beast" (Rome) and "the false prophet" (false religion, or the persecuting arm of the Roman government) were defeated in chapter 19.
  - b. In chapter 20, Satan joins them in the lake of fire after having been bound for a long time.

3. Revelation 20 does not teach a reign of Christ upon this earth for one thousand literal years!
4. It does teach that Christ and His Cause will triumph and that saints are “more than conquerors” through Him who loved us and died for us!

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What do premillennialists believe will take place during the so-called millennium on earth?
2. Which chapter in the Bible is the whole foundation of premillennialism?
3. What happens if it is shown that Revelation 20 does not teach the premillennial program?
4. What kind of language is Revelation written in?
5. What are some examples of figurative language in Revelation?
6. What are two rules for interpreting figurative language?
7. When was Revelation written? To whom?
8. What are some of the items missing in order for Revelation 20 to teach the premillennial theory?
9. What is the theme of Revelation 20?
10. What does the “thousand years” symbolize?
11. What is symbolized by the binding of Satan?
12. What is the eventual end of Satan?
13. In what state (body or soul) were the saints who sat on the thrones?
14. What is the “first resurrection?”
15. What is the “second death?”
16. Prove that Christ is now ruling from David’s throne.
17. How is Satan bound?



## **LESSON XV:**

### **CHRIST IS COMING!**

#### **Introduction:**

1. Premillennialism is a false system based on speculation, sensationalism and wresting of the Scriptures.
2. It has no foundation in the Word of God and must be utterly rejected!
3. Because premillennialism focuses upon the second coming of Christ, premillennialists often charge that those who do not accept their theory just do not believe in the second coming.
4. The second coming of Christ and the events surrounding it give meaning, purpose and hope to all Christians in all ages.

#### **Discussion:**

##### **I. CHRIST IS COMING!**

- A. He promised to come for His disciples (John 14:1-3).
- B. At His ascension, angels promised He would come again (Acts 1:9-11).
- C. The apostles promised He would return.
  1. Paul promised it (1 Thessalonians 4:13,14).
  2. Peter promised it (2 Peter 3:10).
- D. The early Christians eagerly awaited His coming (1 Thessalonians 2:9, 10).
- E. No one knows the time of His return (Matthew 24:36,44; 25:1-13).

##### **II. CHRIST IS COMING TO RAISE THE DEAD!**

- A. Our hope of a resurrection from the dead is based on Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12-20).
  1. The resurrection of Christ is the best attested fact in history!

2. The Jews tried to prevent it happening, and cover it up after it did (Matthew 27:62-66; 28:11-15).
3. The enemies of Christ could have stopped Christianity before it began if they could have produced the dead body of Jesus.
4. Many witnesses, under a variety of circumstances, attested to the resurrection of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:5-8; Acts 2:32).
5. His resurrection was the crowning proof that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God (Romans 1:4).
6. A Moslem described the beautiful tomb of Mohammed and taunted a Christian by saying, "You Christians have nothing like this!" The Christian agreed and said, "That is the difference between Islam and Christianity. You have a dead prophet but we have a living Savior!"

**B. Christians will be raised!**

1. Our bodies will arise from the graves (John 5:28,29).
2. Our bodies will be changed instantaneously (1 Corinthians 15:35-54).
3. Our resurrected bodies will be like Christ's (Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

### **III. CHRIST IS COMING TO DESTROY THIS EARTH!**

- A. The heavens and the earth shall perish (Hebrews 1:10-12).
- B. The world was once destroyed by water, but this time it will be by fire (2 Peter 3:3-13).
  1. It will melt with fervent heat.
  2. It will be burned up.
  3. The elements will be dissolved.
  4. There will be no place left on this earth for a kingdom!
- C. Christians hope for "a new heavens and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-7).

#### **IV. CHRIST IS COMING TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD!**

- A. God has appointed a day and an hour for judgment (John 5:28,29; Acts 17:31).
- B. Jesus Christ will be the Judge (John 5:22).
- C. The Word of God will be the standard of judgment (John 12:48).
- D. All who have ever lived will be judged (2 Corinthians 5:10).
- E. Judgment will be individual and personal (Romans 14:12).
- F. The basis of judgment will be our works (Matthew 25:31-46; James 2:14-18; Revelation 20:12).
- G. Everything will be revealed (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:16).
- H. All men need to repent in light of the coming Judgment (Acts 17:30,31).

#### **V. AT CHRIST'S COMING, ETERNITY WILL BEGIN!**

- A. Heaven will be the eternal home of the righteous (Matthew 25:46).
  - 1. It is where a Christian's heart is (Matthew 6:19-21).
  - 2. It is a Christian's home country (Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:10).
  - 3. It is a place prepared by the Lord for His people (John 14:1-3).
  - 4. It is incorruptible, undefiled, fades not away and is reserved for the faithful (1 Peter 1:3-5).
  - 5. It is a place of rest (Revelation 14:13).
  - 6. There will be no suffering, sickness, sadness or sorrow there (Revelation 21:3,4).
  - 7. It is eternal (Matthew 25:46; Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25).
- B. Hell will be the eternal destiny of the unrighteous (Matthew 25:46).
  - 1. Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41).
  - 2. Hell is a place "where the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-48).

3. It is a place of “outer darkness” (Matthew 25:30).
4. It is a place of torment (Revelation 14:11).
5. The wicked of all the ages will be in Hell (Revelation 21:8).
  - a. Many morally good people will be in Hell (Ephesians 2:8,9; Acts 10:1,2; 11:13,14).
  - b. Many “religious” people will also be there (Matthew 7:13-23; Luke 6:46).
6. It will be everlasting separation from God (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9).

### **Conclusion:**

1. Christ is coming again!
  - a. He is coming to raise the dead.
  - b. He is coming to burn up the earth.
  - c. He is coming to judge all who have ever lived.
  - d. Eternity will follow His coming.
2. Are you prepared for the coming of Christ?
  - a. Have you heard and believed the Gospel (Romans 10:17; John 8:24)?
  - b. Have you repented of all your sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38)?
  - c. Have you confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32, 33; Romans 10:10)?
  - d. Have you been baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3,4)?
  - e. Are you living a faithful Christian life (Revelation 2:10; Philippians 2:14-16).



## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What charge is made by premillennialists against those who do not accept their theory?
2. What is the best attested fact in history?
3. What will be the basis of judgment at the Last Day?
4. What will be the standard of judgment at the Last Day?
5. What will be revealed at the Judgment?
6. What will happen to the earth when Christ comes again?
7. For whom was Hell originally intended?
8. How long will Heaven last? How long will Hell last?
9. When is Christ coming again?
10. What are some of the things which will not be in Heaven?
11. Why will some religious people be in Hell?



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