

JEAN DE LABADIE

Since part of the 20th Chapter of Revelation appears to be literal, a Dutch Reformed theologian, Jean de Labadie, concluded back in 1640 that Jesus would return to rule over the earthly kingdoms of men for 1000 years at the end of the Christian Era. This “millennium,” as it is now called, was to be followed by another Armageddon, Rev 20:8, after which we would have the great white throne and eventually the saints would enter into the Eternal Kingdom of God. Jean de Labadie's millennial theory fit in perfectly with the Lacunza, Darby, Macdonald, Scofield pre-trib rapture scheme of things, so the Dispensationals added pre-millennialism to their body of doctrine. However, the Church of de Labadie's own day considered his view heretical and the Dutch brethren threw de Labadie out of the church. Here is why:

Rev 20:2 is the only supposed support for the pre-millennial view in the whole Bible, and it only works there if you interpret literally one verse in a book that many serious students of Bible prophecy believe to be figurative. Even to arrive at his view, de Labadie had to ignore two universally accepted rules of Bible interpretation:

1. No scripture should be interpreted apart from its context. As already stated, most of Revelation is figurative and there is no textual reason to believe that Rev 20 should be interpreted differently than its context.
2. A word study should be done in the original language to be sure that the passage is correctly understood. The Greek word translated "thousand" in Rev 20:2 (and throughout the rest of chapter), is *chilioi* (Strong's No. 5507). *Chilioi* is an indefinite plural, and may not mean just a single thousand. It could mean one thousand, but it could also mean many thousands.

THE INDEFINITE PLURAL

That is the point, *chilioi* is an indefinite plural. It seems Premillennialists base their definite doctrine on a very indefinite plural. Even though the translation of *chilioi* as one thousand is technically correct, if we insist on it meaning just 1000 years, the sense of the passage could be lost.

A figurative interpretation of Rev 20 is not as wild as one might think. Most of the Church considered Rev 20 to be figurative until de Labadie came along. Since it is scripturally provable that the saints reign with Christ, in His spiritual kingdom right this instant, and that we have done so throughout the Christian Era (Eph 1:3, 1Pe 2:9, Rev 1:6, Rev 5:10), then this "thousand" year reign of Christ could be a pictorial representation of the whole Christian Era.

RULING WITH THE LORD

Besides the last trumpet itself, there are other verses which call the premillennial view into question. According to premillennialism, when Jesus returns for His 1000-year reign, He will rule from Jerusalem in all His power and glory. During that 1000 years, we, the saints, are presumed to be ruling with Him in our new glorified and sinless bodies. At the end of the 1000 years, Satan is somehow supposed to deceive those rulers, now sinless us, for a short season. If that were to happen, we would again be in sin, which would result in our again being separated from the Lord. That is contrary to 1TH 4:17, which clearly states:

1TH 4:17 "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up...to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall ever be with the Lord." Saints will never again be separated from the Lord!

SO WHO'S THE STRONG MAN?

MAT 12:29 "How can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless He first binds the strong man?" When Jesus asked that question, He was in the act of casting out demons. The Lord was plundering Satan's house then, and He is still doing so today through the church.

Jesus permitted Himself to be bound once, at the Cross, but it will never happen again. When Jesus returns to Jerusalem, He will be ruling in all His power and glory. It will be Jesus' kingdom. He will be the "strong man"! Released or not, Satan could only plunder Jesus' kingdom if he could again bind Jesus. Laughable. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. He is King of kings and Lord of lords, forever! Eph 1:20-21 declares, "...when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come." That age to come would have to include any future time that Jesus is on Earth, and beyond. No future time of lost power for the Lord. When the Lord returns at the end of this age, He will rule absolutely...and eternally!

IT'S ALL ABOUT DOMAIN

God gave the Earth to Adam. Adam was made the ruler of the Earth and all that it contained, Gen 1:28. When Adam fell, he delivered his God-given authority into Satan's hands, Luk 4:6. All mankind then became Satan's legal possession. When "we were bought with a price," that was not just some theoretical acquisition. We were purchased from Satan's kingdom by Jesus' precious blood. When we accept Jesus as our personal Savior, by a sovereign act, God the Father transfers us "out of the domain (kingdom, NAS) of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son," Col 1:13. If you are looking for the kingdom age, there it is, right where the Bible has been saying it was all along. The kingdom of the Lord Jesus has existed ever since Act 2:33-36.

At the end of this age, Jesus will indeed return to Earth with His Holy angels and all His "holy ones," in their glorified bodies. That's us, with all the saints who have gone before us, and all of whom who went to be with Him at the last trumpet, 1Co 15:52.

Rev 11:15 "And the seventh angel sounded (the last trumpet) and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.'"

Not for just for 1000 years, but forever!

TWO RESTORATIONS

As the end approaches, things are going to deteriorate in a hurry. If we are to walk in truth, we must guard ourselves against interpreting Scripture to fit our preconceived notions, for "The Lord takes no delight in fools," Ecc 5:4. Insisting on a literal interpretation of a figurative passage may display our orthodoxy before men, but rob us of what the Lord would have us learn from Scripture. The premillennial interpretation of Isa 11:6-10 is a glaring example of the literal hermeneutic carried to the

point of idiocy.

Isaiah 11:1-5 has many allegorical elements: “A shoot [or branch] springs from the stem of Jesse . . . a branch from his root will bear fruit . . . He will judge with the rod of His mouth . . . righteousness will be the belt about His loins and faithfulness the belt about his waist,” etc., etc. All those expressions are obviously figurative, and all conservative Bible scholars understand this passage to be a pictorial description of the Messiah to be born several hundred years in the future.

Now, the first time the Jews were driven off their land was when Nebuchadnezzar exiled them to Babylon. The restoration after the Babylonian captivity was the FIRST restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land. By the time of the crucifixion, the Jews had been restored from the captivity and living in the Holy Land for 568 years. Now lets skip verses 6-10 and go to verse 11. There we read that the Lord will restore his people to the Holy Land “a second time!”

Isa 11:11 “Then it will happen on that day that the Lord Will again recover the SECOND TIME with His hand the remnant of His people.”

Thirty-seven years after Jesus was crucified, 70AD, the Jews were dispersed for a second time into the nations, so the second restoration would have to take place after that, and it did. The second restoration took place when the new nation of Israel was established, in 1948AD. In that year, after almost 1900 years among the Gentiles, the Jews were restored to the Holy Land . . . FOR A SECOND TIME! Now look at the chronology:

Isa 11:1-5	About the coming Messiah	32AD
Isa 11:6-10	About when?	????AD
Isa 11:11	About the 2nd restoration	1948AD

Well, if Isa 11, verses 1-5 are about Jesus’ life on Earth, and verse 11 can be positively pinned to 1948, to what time do you suppose the verses in between refer? Well, because of context, verses 6-10 would logically refer to the time in between Jesus’ life on Earth and 1948, wouldn't they? The only contextually sound way to look at Isa 11:6-10 is figuratively, as a picture of the Christian Era.

Now Premillennialists recognize the figurative elements in Isa 11:1-5: the branch, the root, the fruit, the belt, the breath, and so on. Those common figures are understood by all. No one really expects a literal branch, with leaves and all, to spring out of the forehead of David's father. All theologians recognize this passage as teaching that one of Jesse’s descendants will be the Messiah. It’s figurative, and they all know it. But when they read on a couple of verses, and see a lion eating straw, they say: “Ah, that must be literal, and since it hasn't happened yet, it must be going to take place in the millennium. And there is more support for our pre-millennial view.” They further pontificate that during the millennium, a “nursing child will really play by the hole of the cobra,” and “the leopard will really lie down with the kid,” etc., thus doing away with God's natural law. Anything is possible with the Lord, of course, but a literal interpretation of those verses is certainly not their most probable meaning.

Many well-known Bible teachers are famous for accepting allegorical interpretations for allegories they understand, while demanding a literal interpretation for the allegories they don't. All the while, heralding their orthodoxy by broadcasting their faith in a “literal hermeneutic.” But if the passage in question is figurative, a “literal hermeneutic” will not lead anyone to the truth. The literal or figurative nature of a

Scripture is not determined by the reader, but by the author, and some Scriptures cannot be recognized as literal or figurative unless the principles of hermeneutics are applied without doctrinal bias.

Interestingly enough, many Evangelical groups, including major Evangelical Bible colleges, use the premillennial view as a litmus test for orthodoxy. One Christian publisher even trumpets proudly that all of its publications are premillennial, as if a differing view on the millennium were mortal sin. But despite its popularity, the weight of scriptural evidence appears to be against the premillennial view. It will be interesting to see if the Holy Spirit can quicken the Church to the possibility that it is once again standing dogmatically . . . on a false doctrine.

BUT IS THIS TRUTH IMPORTANT?

Some brethren ask: “Does it really matter what we believe about the millennium? Isn't soul-winning where it's at?” Then making a steeple of their hands and with their eyes cast heavenwards, they add, “Won't we all end up in Heaven together, anyway?” That kind of unctuous platitude just kills me. The idea that any truth is unimportant is of the devil. It ignores the spiritual nature of the Christian's battle and the shrewdness of the enemy. Spiritual warfare is a never-ending contest for truth. As the father of lies, Satan is the author of every false doctrine that gets into the Church. Every false doctrine we believe or teach, no matter how minor it may seem to us, helps the enemy and weakens our witness.

But how can pre-millennialism hurt anyone? In the same way that the pre-tribulation rapture myth can hurt. By rocking the Church to sleep with the sweet lullaby of “judgment deferred,” with the siren song that “hard times may be coming, but they're coming for the lost during the Great Tribulation, while we, the Church, because of our great piety and holiness, will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and later, ruling with Jesus in His wonderful millennial kingdom.”

Nothing could be further from the truth than such banality! We were appointed as Jesus' spiritual priests and kings for this present age to despoil the domain of the enemy. Every time a saint leads a sinner to the Lord, he is breaking into Satan's house, and carrying off his goods, Mat 12:29.

Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as affirmed by the blood of the martyrs and the prayers of the saints, the enemy was bound throughout this age, “that he might not deceive the nations.” And he didn't. The whole western world once recognized Jesus as the Christ and that knowledge changed the world, but not any more. Now the world is changing the Church. But hasn't sin always been bad and hasn't Satan always been the father of sin? Of course, but in this generation, the individual saint has forgotten his responsibility for the lost:

Eze 3:18 “When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”

The world is in the condition it is today because we have not done our job. And just as Scripture warned, Satan has been loosed upon us . . .

Rev 20:7-8 “And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore.”

Jesus bound the enemy at the cross, John 12:32, and then gave the Church the keys:

Mat 16:19 "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

But the lukewarm Laodicean church of today has again set Satan free. Look at the disgraceful spiritual conditions that have enveloped America during the last three decades. We Christians are responsible -- we are Jesus' kings and priests -- and if we really understand that we are responsible, then we will get busy serving the Lord so we will "not be ashamed at His coming." If we really believe that "judgment begins at the household of God," then we indeed "work out our own salvation in fear and trembling," in godly fear of those trials "which are coming upon the earth":

Rev 12:11-12 "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

However, if we believe that judgment is for the other guy, after we've been raptured out, or believe that judgment is still a thousand years away, ah, that's a different story. Then we can dabble in the materialistic world for a while, repenting when we see Antichrist coming or when the Great Tribulation begins. Meanwhile, to show our pro-life conservatism, we can lie down in front of an abortion clinic or two while our lost friends and neighbors go to Hell because we did not tell them that in God's pure eyes, we are all monsters of iniquity, in desperate need of the cleansing blood of His Son.