***Amillennialism and Premillennialism  
  
RV236-02***

We are studying Revelation 20:1-3. Our subject is "The Binding of Satan." This is segment number three.

The Old Testament Messianic Kingdom on earth is revealed here in Revelation 20 to be 1000 years in length. This is a literal period of time. During this millennium of the Jewish kingdom under Jesus Christ, Satan, we have seen, will be removed from the earth along with his demons. Satan at this time is chained in order to restrict his movement. Satan is placed in the abyss, and is sealed in by God who alone can break the seal.

During the millennium, all nations and all political leaders will be free of Satan's deception. That will make a dramatically different world than we have ever known. Since Satan is today active in deceiving nations, he is not locked in the abyss. Consequently, the millennium is future. That was a very important sentence, so I will repeat it: Since Satan is today active in deceiving nations (this is demonstrated today by both Scripture and experience), he is therefore not locked up and inactive in the abyss, and the millennium, therefore, must be future, because while he is active, the millennium cannot take place. As we've already indicated in the previous session, a very large number of Christians believe that the millennium is already in force, and it is easy to get carried away if you're not a careful student of the Bible.

Many years ago, we had a man in our church who was a regular attender, who had a lot of instruction in the Bible, but who got caught up with the prosperity, postmillennial concept that we looked at in the previous session. And standing in the foyer, he said to one of our men, who later reported his shock to me: "We are now in the millennium. The millennium is not something future. We are in it now." That man is no longer with us. He no longer really walks with the Lord. Life is really all distressed for him, and it doesn't take much to get off track with God when you're negative to something that is true. Always be negative to something that is false – never to what is true.

At the end of the 1,000-year kingdom, we are told, Satan will be released for a short time again from his imprisonment. At that time, he will rally a large number of people to join him in a final war against Jesus Christ. Those who join Satan are unbelievers who were born during the millennium, who have not trusted in Christ as King and Savior.

The millennial world, we have pointed out, will be made up of people who will be in both resurrected (and thus glorified) bodies, and in their natural old sin nature bodies. It will be a dramatically different population than the world has ever known before. People were glorified, resurrected bodies will be living in the same world with people who have natural, old-sin-nature bodies such as we have today. To those people who are in their natural bodies, children will be born during the millennium, and the children will possess a certain nature as well. Social; health; and, economic conditions during the millennium will produce a huge increase in the world's population as life span is increased, and the occurrence of death is decreased.

All mankind will be well-versed in Bible doctrine, and divine standards of right conduct will be enforced. That will make a dramatically different world. You will learn the Word of God. You will be bombarded with these good things as now we are bombarded by the media with the bad things. People will know how to go to heaven. People will know what Christ has done. People will know the problem of sin. People will know the need for justification. Whether they agree or not, the standards of the divine institution will be enforced, and righteousness will be demanded of every citizen.

**Views of the Millennium**

There are three main views concerning the millennium.

**Postmillennialism**

We looked at the first in the previous session, which is the postmillennial view. It says that Jesus Christ is going to return from heaven at the end of a 1,000-year millennium. This is a non-literal interpretation of Revelation 20, and it views the world as gradually being conquered by the gospel, so that it becomes morally better during this 1,000-year period. After a 1,000 years of worldwide conversion to Christianity, and an age of righteousness, the Second Coming of Christ takes place.

**Dominion Theology**

The modern-day expression of postmillennialism is in Dominion Theology, which means that Christians are going to dominate society, and take over the levers of power; or, in Reconstructionism, which means that Christians will accumulate the wealth and reconstruct society, after it collapses, on a biblical basis. Thus, the world will be rebuilt into a golden age. But this is not true. This is far from what we find in Scripture. This is a view totally imposed upon the Word of God.

A more significant viewpoint is the one which actually replaced first early premillennialism. Let me tell you up front that we do have records of what the early church fathers believed. The early church fathers were those men were either students of the apostles, or immediately followed them. Their writings make it very clear to us that, for the first 250 years of the Christian era, all these church leaders and teachers were premillennial. And I mean all of them. Not one single writer of the church fathers (not one single record) suggests anything but premillennial viewpoint.

**Amillennialism**

How did this happen? Amillennialism. Here's what most of your church friends believe. The church is that, by and large your friends attend, are amillennial churches. The seminaries to which their pastors go to, and which brands them and frames their viewpoint, are amillennial schools.

**St. Augustine**

This actually began with one of the great fathers and teachers of the Middle Ages, St. Augustine. He put it into organized form. He lived from 354 to 430 A.D. Augustine rejected the literal interpretation of the teaching about the reign of Christ upon this earth. So, there is point number one. He rejected the concept that Jesus Christ, personally and literally, would reign upon this earth. Thus, you have the letter "a" before the word "millennial." In the Greek language, the letter "a" is a negative. To say amillennial is to indicate no millennium whatsoever. He actually identifies the millennium as the period between the First and Second Coming of Christ; that is, the church age. He taught that Satan was bound at the First Coming of Christ at the cross.

Well, immediately you can see that that's not a literal, true binding, where Satan is inactive. H is talking about a spiritual binding, such that Christ conquered Satan's hold upon death, and provided salvation. Well, Christ did do that, but that is not the binding of which Revelation 20 speaks of. It is very clear that during that time, Satan is out of touch with influencing the world. He is not out of touch with influencing the world today.

For a while, Augustine believed that the first 1,000 years of the Christian era was the millennium, and he was living in it. But after the year 1,000 came and passed, and Christ did not return, the amillennialists transferred the millennium into heaven, and said that it is taking place there as saints go to heaven.

So, the amillennialists believe that there is no millennium on this earth when Christ will return to rule over all nations. They say that Christ will only reign as He does now – in heaven.

**Israel and the Church**

In this point of view, Israel and the church are fused together so that there is no future held for the Jewish people as a nation. Until 1948, the amillennials were riding very high; very powerful; and, very confident, as they would say that the Jews will never again be a nation upon this earth. And we used to listen to these guys telling us that the Jew will never be a nation upon this earth. He has permanently been disowned by God, and the church has taken his place. All of that is the result of non-literal interpretation. Suddenly, the church receives all these promises to the Jews of the Old Testament. But you will also notice, as you read these writers, that they never attribute the curses to the church. The church never comes under the Christians to Israel. The church is never told to stone people who work on Saturday. The church is never told to do all kinds of things that were required under the Mosaic system.

So, Israel and the church refused together, and everything is enormous confusion. This position was accepted by the Roman Catholic Church as its view of the millennium. The first resurrection is spiritual salvation; and, the second is physical resurrection. All was in confusion because the amillennialists did not interpret the Scripture literally.

So, here comes the Roman Catholic Church. It is completely predominant in the world. It is the supreme church throughout the Middle Ages. And amillennialism is the view of the Scriptures. It is a total disruption and a wrenching of literal, prophetic teaching.

**Premillennialism**

In the early church, there was this position called premolar premillennialism. You can see from the prefix "pre," that Jesus Christ is going to come *before* the millennium begins, in contrast to postmillennialism, and in contrast amillennialism, which has no millennium at all. The premillennial viewpoint says that Christ will return in His Second Advent, and He will set up a literal kingdom on earth to rule for 1,000 years. This will be the kingdom of righteousness and peace in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and particularly the Davidic Covenant. The premillennial position views the church age as coming to a sudden, catastrophic end; that world conditions will gradually worsen; and, that things will not get better.

**Pessimistic and Negative**

For this reason, premillennials are accused of being pessimistic and negative. Well, what they are doing is being true to Scripture, because people do not like to think that the world is getting worse, but that it's getting better. Premillennialism takes the position that living unbelievers will be judged with death, and living believers will be taken into the kingdom at the Second Coming. When Christ returns at the end of the tribulation, the unbelievers will be put to death. And thus the millennium begins with all believers. And the believers are taken into the kingdom.

**The Rapture?**

Someone asked me today, "What did they do with the Thessalonian rapture picture of Christ meeting the church in the air. If He's going to meet them in the air, and amillennialism says that there's only a judgment day, what they do is say that Christ meets the saints in the air, and then comes right back down to the earth with them. But in John 14:6, Jesus says, "I'm going to return to take you to where I am," and where He is, is in heaven. That's where He takes them when He meets them in the air. This is another total wrenching of Scripture out of complete literal meaning of that Thessalonians passage.

So, premillennialism therefore says that the church will not go through the tribulation. There are several passages of Scripture which make that very clear, but we're not going to get into those here. The church is viewed as totally separate from Israel. The people of Israel are viewed as God's chosen select people, but they have had their kingdom postponed because of the crucifixion of their Messiah. The church and Israel are viewed as totally separate entities in the program of God. Everybody in all dispensations and all ages are saved by faith in the Messiah Savior. And all believers in all dispensations will be raised in various stages of the first resurrection. The millennium will close with the final rebellion of Satan and mankind, and their defeat by Jesus Christ.

At the end of the millennium, unbelievers of all ages will be raised from the dead. This is what the Bible refers to as the second resurrection. The second resurrection is not the physical resurrection of believers. It's the resurrection of unbelievers, and they will be raised to be judged at the great white throne judgment. Following that, the new heavens and the earth will be created. All of this is the result of literal interpretation of Scripture.

Now, for the first 250 years (for the first three centuries), premillennialism was the normal interpretation of Scripture in all the writings of the fathers of the church. But when we came to the Emperor Constantine, and the church was made the Department of Religion of the Roman Empire, things suddenly changed. Now the church was being patronized by the government, and the church came into great power and great influence. At that time, the Roman Catholic Church, which now began to form up into a crystallized organization, concluded that the Pope and the cardinals of the church were the princes of the church. They were the new Israel. Consequently, they accepted the amillennial position such that they were the kingdom.

You have very biblical denominations today who will speak about bringing in the kingdom. And if you know prophecy, it makes you cringe a little. We are not bringing in the kingdom. We are bringing in the body of Christ, the church. As people are saved, we add them to the body of Christ. The kingdom is going to be brought in by Jesus Christ.

So, while Christians were under persecution and attack, the premillennial view was generally held. They looked for the Lord's return to reign. But once the church became dominant and prosperous, it began to look upon its earthly supremacy as the reign of Christ on this earth. It began to look upon itself as conquering the world under a hierarchy of the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church.

So, in the fourth century, the universal premillennial view, from the apostles down through the first 250 years, was replaced by amillennialism. The Roman Catholic Church turned strongly and violently against the premillennial writings of the fathers. The great tragedy was that the Protestant Reformers who, because of their background and teaching in Roman Catholicism, held the amillennial view, simply accepted that because the Reformers were not students of prophecy. The Reformers were not zeroed in on the fact that Jesus is coming again. They never were able to separate Israel and the church. They took that wholesale era accepted by the Roman Catholic Church, from the influence of their church father Augustine, and brought it into the reformed churches today. That's why most denominations and most churches today hold the amillennial viewpoint.

The Roman Catholic Church went solidly for amillennialism under the influence of Augustine. That meant that the present age is the millennium. That meant that Satan is now bound. This attack on premillennialism was justified by the idea that premillennialism talks about a golden age, and they were accused of being sensual by that. The first resurrection was the spiritual birth instead of the physical resurrection of believers. And the church ultimately was to triumph over the world. So, again, you have this idea that the world is going to get better.

Augustine had crystallized this viewpoint, and caused premillennialism to be abandoned. The Reformers gave little study to prophecy, so they too argued against millennialism. The reformers did not reject biblical premillennialism – they were just ignorant of it. It's important to say that. They never were on top of it. They didn't say that it was wrong. They just weren't aware of it. The amillennialists today put the millennium in heaven during the church age – completely spiritualizing away the concept of the millennium.

Amillennialism is popular and most Christian denominations because it is a flexible system. You will find conservatives and liberals and Roman Catholics who are amillennialists. Since taken over by the Reformers from the Roman Catholics, this is the orthodoxy on prophecy. Amillennialists are inconsistent in that they use a literal method of interpretation outside of prophecy. You should know that. For some strange reason, they are consistent in literal interpretation except for prophecy, and there's no rhyme or reason for that.

So, the amillennialists will read the passage about the annunciation to Mary by Gabriel – that she would have this child as a virgin woman. They say, "Oh, that's literal." Then it goes on to say, "And He will rule over the house of Jacob. And He will reign from the throne of David forever." And they say, "Oh, no, that's spiritual." I'm telling you, this is within the same verse in the same context – close together. So, they chop right there, and say this part is literal; and, this part is not, because to say that the house of Jacob is the Jews (which is what it means), and to say that the throne of his father David (which is the earthly throne from Jerusalem), would completely devastate their position of spiritualizing away those things, and making the church the substitute Israel.

Consequently, the liberals make fun of the amillennialists, and rightly so, because the liberals are consistent. The liberals say that the first part of the annunciation to Mary is also spiritualized: There never was a virgin birth. There never was a God-man born from a virgin woman. That's a spiritual expression. And they too agree that there is no earthly king; there is no throne of David; and, there is no house of Jacob. So, amillennialism are the dominant viewpoint today.

**The Plymouth Brethren**

However, in the providence of God, it's hard to believe that something like 250 years ago, in Protestant groups, very little was known about prophecy. Little was known about the return of Christ. And suddenly, largely through the study of a group of believers who were nonconformists in England (nonconformists to the Church of England), in the city of Plymouth, a group of believers began meeting, that we refer to as the Plymouth Brethren. And they began a Bible study movement. That was unheard of – people gathering to study the Bible. And they had competent men who knew enough about the Greek and the Hebrew to say that this is what it really is saying. So, it wasn't not your opinion against my opinion, or someone else's opinion. The result was that they suddenly realize the enormous inconsistency of the amillennial position, and the contradictions within it. And it hit them like a bolt out of the blue: Israel and the church are two different programs. And you cannot apply to the church what belongs to Israel; and, you cannot apply to Israel what belongs to the church. From then on, premillennialism moved into high gear.

**C.I. Schofield**

Well, along came a man who used to be a lawyer, and he became a Christian. That changed his law practice, and he became an avid student of the Word of God. His name was C.I Schofield, and he began writing a series of notes to be incorporated into the King James Bible in explaining the premillennial and dispensational frame of reference. It was dispensation because premillennialism indicates that there are different ages in which God deals with people in different ways, such as the Jewish age and the church age. Scofield had the capacity to put this together in a terrific way.

**Lewis Sperry Chafer**

Schofield had a man in his church, which used to be in downtown Dallas, the First Congregational Church. He invited a man who was an evangelist to run a series of meetings. That man's name was Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder of Dallas Seminary. Dr. Chafer used to enjoy telling us in class how, after that series of meetings here in Dallas, S.I. Schofield took him into his office and he said, "Lewis, you are a teacher. You should get out of evangelism." Dr. Chafer had been there for 14 years. He said, "You should become a teacher. That is where your gift lies par excellence." He said, "Here is this great, hulking, big former lawyer. And he had him kneel down in his office, and he put his arm around Chafer, and committed him to the teaching ministry. What a commitment!

**Dallas Theological Seminary**

Who knows but what in that moment, the hand of God was set in motion to produce Dallas Theological Seminary with all the impact that it has had in producing the finest teachers of the Word of God? When a Dallas seminary graduate finishes, the whole Bible fits together. It's all taught from a premillennial dispensational frame of reference. That is unlike a school like Fuller on the West Coast, where you'll have all the jumble put in from one class to another so you don't know where you are. Here is a consistent theology. And that's why from Dallas Seminary come the most competent teachers; the most competent presidents of schools; college presidents; and, leaders, just because they achieved Chafer's vision of men who knew the Word of God from the original languages so that they could really tell people what God said, and not what they think.

The result was that Scofield and Chafer became good friends. One day they were walking down the streets of Dallas, and Dr. Chafer turned to Dr. Schofield and said, "How are you coming on the notes for the Bible?" And Schofield said, "Last night, I said, 'Amen, it's done.'" The Schofield Bible was published with those notes, and immediately it became the object of great attack and great antagonism from the amillennial world, as did C.I, Schofield and Dr. Chafer also. But the Schofield Bible has been under attack since the day it was published in the early part of the 20th century. People have been trying to destroy it and tear to shreds, and all it has done is become a bigger seller and a bigger seller and a bigger seller. People who read the notes of the Schofield Bible understand finally how all pieces of Scripture fit together. They don't have to spiritualize anything. And if there is a symbol that the Bible uses, it explains it.

You know that we have now been interpreting the revelation from symbols, which either the book explains, or we go to other Scriptures, and we interpret Scripture by Scripture, which is a principle of interpretation, and we look for where this symbol has been used elsewhere in the Bible, and we say, "There's its meaning," and it works every time.

So, premillennialism came on big and strong, and it produced the great expositors of Scripture; the greatest missionaries; and, the most fervent evangelists. These men finally had a Bible that would fit together.

Premillennialism, as the original interpretation of prophecy from the apostles on down through the first three centuries, was a literal method of interpretation. But under the influence of a man named Clement of Alexandria, in the third century, and particularly his pupil, Origin, came the non-literal interpretation of Scripture. These men were just really ridiculous. They said, "The words don't mean anything. You must look under the words for the real meaning."

That's why, if you read a book that interprets prophecies from the amillennial point of view, there's no consistent agreement. Whereas, if you read books written by premillennialists, the agreement is consistent because it's literal. It can only mean one thing. Whereas with the amillennialists, whatever you think is what it means. So, this absurd line of teaching became crystallized in amillennialism, and it had replaced the early premillennialism, and the Reformers went right along with a whole trap.

So, what are we saying? We're saying that the Old Testament predicts a kingdom of the Jewish people to be led by a Messiah Savior which will dominate the world and rule all nations from the city of Jerusalem. This Old Testament kingdom is what Jesus came and offered to the Jews, but the Jews rejected it. This is the kingdom that Jesus preached; that the apostles preached; and, to which Jesus called the nation to national repentance, in order to bring in the kingdom. And that national repentance was signified by going and being immersed in water baptism. That was the meaning of that baptism. It was not Christian baptism. It was not the baptism of Jesus. It was a totally different identification. Their baptism identifying with the kingdom that Christ was about to set up.

The gospel of Matthew is actually the last book of the Old Testament. It completes the Old Testament kingdom promises. It promised a king through the line of David to rule on David's throne, but none appeared. It promised characteristics of the Messiah King which had not yet been seen in any religious leader in Israel. Israel is still looking for that messiah. Jerusalem was to be the capital of the world, but Jerusalem was under the rule of the Roman Empire at the time. The promise of peace, righteousness, and security was not realized by the Jews in their land.

So, they made the serious mistake of looking upon Christ, and saying, "None of these things have taken place that the king is supposed to do for us. You can't be the king. Matthew presents Jesus Christ as the son of David, who had come to fulfill the Davidic covenant, as the son of Abraham, to fulfill the spiritual blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant to all the world. Jesus Christ electrified the hopes of the Jews because He presented Himself as the one who had come to bring in the kingdom. And He was qualified to do so.

The Jews failed in their spiritual preparation to receive their Messiah King. They rejected Him, and this rejection could never eliminate the promise of the kingdom because these were unconditional promises to Abraham and David. All it could do was postpone it, and that's what happened. The Jews were set on the back burner. And in came a new thing, on the day of Pentecost – the church age.

In time, the promises to the Jewish people of a kingdom will be fulfilled. All of this is the result of the program of God for Israel and for the church.

**The Old Testament**

There is one thing more I'd like to show you today. I want to take you back to the Old Testament, because one of the things that we premillennials are accused of is that we base this whole concept of an earthly kingdom on one small passage of Scripture in the Bible in Revelation 20 – the only place where it talks about a kingdom. That is not true. There it tells us how long the kingdom is going to be, but the kingdom on this earth with a Messiah ruling was very clearly revealed in the Old Testament. We're going to sweep through the Scriptures, and give you a little sense of that.

**The Abrahamic Covenant**

There was, first of all, the covenant with Abraham. This promised a land to the Jewish people; a seed – a nation which would follow; and, blessings. This was the first stage of the fulfillment of the Genesis 3:15 promise of a Messiah. This promise to Abraham was confirmed later in the Palestinians; the Davidic; and, the New Covenants. These covenants established that the Jews would be a nation forever. They would have a royal line of rulers through King David. They would possess the land of Palestine forever in spiritual new birth. And their king would rule over the nation from an earthly throne. All of that is in the covenants.

These covenants can never be broken or terminated because there was no there was no "if" clause in them. It was not like the Mosaic Covenant where God says, "I'm going to bless you if you do this. And if you don't do this, I'm going to curse you." These covenants never had a clause. God said to Abraham, "I'm going to do this for Abraham, and your descendants are going to rebel against me, and I'm going to chastise them, but this is going to happen." He said the same thing to David.

So, because God has another divine purpose in the church that can in no way neutralize (nullify) the promises to the Jewish people. This kingdom was confirmed in the Old Testament.

**Psalms**

The Psalms confirm the earthly kingdom promise. For example, if you will read Psalm 45, you'll find that it talks about the glory of a King Messiah ruling. Psalm 72 speaks specifically about the reign of a King Messiah. And Psalm 89 speaks about the Davidic Covenant under which the King Messiah will rule. So, the Psalms are very explicit.

**Isaiah**

In Isaiah, there is confirmation of an eternal earthly kingdom. Isaiah covers the period of time from Israel's day to the creation of a new heaven and a new earth at the end of the millennium. The first part of the book of Isaiah deals with judgment that is coming upon the nation to result in the Babylonian captivity. The last part of Isaiah deals with a glorious future for the Jews and for gentiles in an earthly kingdom under the King Messiah.

Because there are these two main views in the book of Isaiah, the liberals talk about a first Isaiah and a second Isaiah (a proto-Isaiah and a Deutero-Isaiah. They say that the same person could not have written this book, because you suddenly get to the latter portion of the book of Isaiah, and it is dramatically different; not in style, but in content, because the last part talks about God's blessing upon them in their kingdom. Whereas the first part talks about the judgment on the way to Babylon. Isaiah envisions a future day when Israel's kingdom will be established above all nations, and the knowledge of the Lord will flow to the whole world from Jerusalem. It is very clear. Isaiah says that war will cease. Isaiah says that righteousness will be enforced everywhere among mankind, and the animal world will stop being ferocious. All of this, Isaiah says is in the future rule of God on this earth.

Isaiah indicates that the coming of the Messiah King was to fulfill the covenant, foretold in detail clearly as an earthly kingdom. The Jews, Isaiah said, would be gathered from all nations into their land. Has that happened? No. Has it ever happened? No. It is still future. It will not happen until the Second Coming.

**Jeremiah**

The Prophet Jeremiah confirms an earthly eternal kingdom. The first part of Jeremiah denounces the unfaithfulness of the southern kingdom to God, and foretells their captivity. Then the book predicts a regathering of scattered Jews under the Messiah King on the earth, not on heaven. Jeremiah is very clear that this regathering is on this earth. Jeremiah stresses the judgments of God on the Jews as temporary under the Davidic Covenant, which will be literally fulfilled.

**Ezekiel**

The prophet Ezekiel confirms an earthly eternal kingdom. It deals with judgments of discipline on the Jews and their faithless leaders. There in Ezekiel you have that vision of the dry bones where God says, "This represents the house of Israel, and I'm going to put those bones back together. I'm going to put flesh on them, and I'm going to put them back to life." That is a clear declaration that the Jew will be restored as a nation. That has happened in our day. Ezekiel predicts a gathering of Jews into Palestine where they will no longer be a prey to the nations. They will be settled in peace. You'd have to be a fool to say this today. If there's anything that's not true about Israel, and never has been, it is that they have been gathered into their own nation, into their own Promised Land, and that they are there in peace.

Ezekiel says that the Jews have been given a shepherd from the line of David who will care for them. That is the Messiah. There is detailed prophecy in Ezekiel about the restoration of temple worship on the earth under the Messiah King, and that's going to happen during that kingdom era of the millennium.

**Daniel**

The book of Daniel confirms an earthly internal kingdom. It reveals the course, as you know of gentile world powers. The gentile kingdoms will be replaced by a world the kingdom of heaven – a kingdom where heaven remains on this earth forever after the final restoration of the Roman Empire and its destruction. The Messiah king will rule over these nations on the earth.

**The Minor Prophets**

We have 12 minor prophets in the Old Testament. Minor prophets means that they wrote short books, not that they were unimportant books compared to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. These 12 minor prophets confirm an earthly eternal kingdom.

**Hosea**

Hosea prophesied to the northern kingdom. Spiritually adulterous Jews would be regathered, Hosea predicted, as God's people under the Messiah King. After centuries without a king, Hosea said that, without a government; without sacrifices; and, without priests, the Jews would return to God with all of these things.

**Joel**

The prophet Joel prophesied to the northern kingdom. Joel describes the future, dreadful day of the Lord, and deliverance of the Jews by God Himself. The Jews will be spiritually cleansed and prospered, and they will dwell forever in their promised land. Joel says that the voice of God will, after that regathering, speak from Jerusalem to the world. When has the voice of God spoken from Jerusalem to all the world? Never. In the millennium, that's exactly the way it will be.

**Amos**

The prophet Amos dealt with the northern kingdom. He predicts a raising up of the tabernacle of David, which has fallen; meaning the kingdom promised to David through the Davidic covenant. Amos says that the land will produce abundantly. It will be fruitful. He indicates that the Jews will be returned to Palestine as a nation, never to be removed again. Was Amos wrong? Was Amos lying? Or, are the Jews going to be returned to Palestine, never to be removed again. It hasn't happened now.

How are the Jews trying to survive? They're giving away the West Bank. And if you look at a map, you will see what a chunk of territory that is for Israel to give back to the Arabs. They're afraid. They're in great fear.

**Obadiah**

The prophet Obadiah said that for Mount Zion will come deliverance and holiness, and the Jews will enter their possessions promised by God. Obadiah said that the land will be inhabited, and the Lord will rule over them. You can't spiritualize this, Obadiah said that the Promised Land will be inhabited by the people of God, and the Lord Messiah will be there to reign over them.

**Jonah**

Concerning Jonah, there's no explicit prophecy of the covenanted kingdom of David in the book of Jonah. But it does typify the Jewish nation's mission of bringing God's message to the whole world, which will happen in the millennium. It illustrates, further, the Jews' failure and their future proclamation of doctrine after they have been regathered in their kingdom during the millennium. They failed in their mission of being witnesses, but they will come back to that, and Jonah is an example of.

**Micah**

The prophet Micah prophesied to the southern kingdom. He pronounces wars and judgment upon the Jews, as do the other prophets. He predicts a time when the kingdom of the Jews will be ruled over by a physically present Messiah who will teach the Word of God to the whole world. Micah says that Christ the King will rule over all nations to dispense absolute justice. You couldn't get clearer than that, Christ the Messiah King will rule over all nations to dispense absolute justice in the world. Peace will prevail everywhere, Micah says: "And each man will sit under his own vine and fig tree."

Oh my! What will we do with governments then? If you have your own vine and fig tree, you can also put the thumb of your nose to the government. You are independent as long as you have your own possession of private property (which is what this is saying) in the millennium – God's economic system, which is private property capitalism throughout Scripture everywhere. This will be the means of prosperity. And because this will be true, people will be free. You cannot have freedom if you don't own your own property. These conditions, furthermore, Micah stresses, are going to exist forever. It is Micah who predicts the birth of the King Messiah. And the covenant promises of the earthly kingdom are declared to be certain of fulfillment.

**Nahum**

The prophet Nahum prophesied the destruction of Ninevah. He calls attention to the messengers of God, bringing good tidings and peace of a future kingdom.

**Habakkuk**

The prophet of Habakkuk declares that the just shall live by faith. That's that verse that was quoted in Romans by Paul that led Martin Luther to salvation. He declares that the just shall live by faith, and wonders how a pure God can permit evil to go on. Habakkuk says, "God, I don't know, how you allow this to go on. I don't know how you permit the Jews to even exist as a nation with what they're doing." But he does at the same time envision the glory of God covering the heavens of the earth, which will be filled with praises to God in the time of a coming kingdom on this earth. Habakkuk says, "God, you ought to wipe us all out. We're a filthy, dirty group. And yet, I know that you have made clear to me that the time is coming when the Jewish people will be first in line, leading praises from all heaven and all earth to God in the coming kingdom on this earth."

**Zephaniah**

The prophet Zephaniah spoke to the southern kingdom. He predicts Israel's coming captivity and divine judgment on the surrounding nations. He predicts the return from captivity, and that the Jews will be a source of praise by all nations on earth. When have the Jews ever been a source that all nations have praised? Do you want to talk to the Saudi Arabians about that? Do you want to talk to Saddam Hussein about that? Do you want to talk to the Jihads and the Hamas group of Arabs about praising the Jews? It hasn't happened. It never has. You can see why, if you don't want to be literal in terms of a kingdom, you have to wipe this all out as symbolic language.

Furthermore, Zephaniah says that the Jews will then experience no more evil. They'll be safe.

**Haggai**

The prophet Haggai predicts the overthrow of gentile nations. He also says that this will take place when Christ establishes His kingdom on earth to rule as per the prophecies of Daniel. That's amazing. Haggai is very explicit.

**Zechariah**

Zechariah speaks of the Jews being restored to their earthly kingdom in five out of the 14 chapters. Zachariah has 14 chapters. In five of those chapters, he speaks about the Jews becoming an earthly kingdom. He predicts peace and security for every man on his own private property again. Jerusalem is seen as the focal point of truth about God to the whole world. He reveals that, after the great battle of the nations of Armageddon, the Lord will rule the world. Zechariah is really clear. After the great battle of all nations facing the Messiah King, which will be at Armageddon, the Lord will rule the world.

So, here's what we have. The Old Testament presents repeated, deliberate revelation concerning the earthly Messianic Kingdom promised to the Jews. Prophet after prophet has added information about this earthly kingdom under the Messiah King from David's line. It's not just Revelation 20 that talks about this kingdom. The Jews who read these Old Testament prophecies could not have understood anything by them except a literal, earthly, eternal kingdom as per the Davidic Covenant. I can assure you that the virgin Mary knew exactly what she was being told – that this child that she would have would be a King ruling over the house of Jacob from His father David's throne forever. She was versed in Scripture. She knew what the Old Testament promised, and she made the connection.

The Old Testament prophets guaranteed that, on the throne of David in Jerusalem, over a regathered and regenerate Israel, there would one day reign, in unexcelled glory and righteousness, the Messiah King of the house of David. And the amillennialists say, "No, He won't." This is what amillennialism denies – what all these prophets have said. There will be a descendant of King David ruling in Jerusalem over a regenerated Israel, who one day would rule all the nations through their Messiah King. The vision given to these prophets is the background for interpreting Revelation 20. Revelation 20 is not an isolated text on the kingdom. It is to be interpreted on the background of these prophets.

The Old Testament kingdom is not merely the rule of God in the hearts of men. It is not the kingdom inside of believers. The amillennialists say that the kingdom is here, right inside you. No, it isn't. The Old Testament prophets made it clear that the kingdom was outside, in this world, and on this earth.

Having said all this, you and I should breathe a great sigh of relief that God has enabled us to be doctrinally instructed to where we have this millennial issue clear. Premillennialism is what the Bible teaches.

When I was in the seminary, I took a course on premillennialism under Dr. Walvoord, who was then president of the school. I expected a very powerful textbook on premillennialism for the class. When he walked in, he told us to go to the bookstore and to buy at that time the most authoritative book on amillennialism against premillennialism. We were going to take the best book on amillennialism to study premillennialism? That's exactly what he did. We went to that book, and we countered and explained and refuted every argument that was in the amillennial book. And one day, I was appalled to read a few lines in Dr. Ellis's book (the great amillennialists) that said: "It must now be understood that if the Bible must be interpreted literally, then the premillennialists are right." There is where it all comes back to it. If the Bible has to be read as a book of language, in which words have meaning, then the only interpretation you will come out with, Ellis said, is premillennialism. But he said: "The criminals are wrong. The Bible is not to be interpreted literally, but it is to be understood in it spiritual meanings." And there's the whole story. And you will have to decide that we, as a church, are right about this; that the literal interpretation is God's way; and, that, consequently, if it is, premillennialism is the only view of the millennium that will be in effect on this earth.

We're going to find, as we go on now in Revelation 20, a good deal more about this 1,000-year period, and who will be in it; who will be reading; who will be part of it; and, what's going to go on? This is a pivotal chapter in the Word of God. Please stay with us as we continue our study in the sessions ahead.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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