MILLENNIUM

I. Biblical references

D.

E.

- A. There are no usages of the word "millennium" in the Bible.
- B. "Millennium" is a theological word derived from the Latin words *mille*, meaning "thousand," and *annus*, meaning "year."
- C. The theological word "millennium" has been used to refer to the "thousand years" mentioned in Rev. 20:2-7.
 - Rev. 20:2 "Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years"
 - Rev. 20:3 "until the thousand years are fulfilled"
 - Rev. 20:4 "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years"
 - Rev. 20:5 "until the thousand years were ended"
 - Rev. 20:6 "reign with Him a thousand years"
 - Rev. 20:7 "whenever the thousand years are ended"
 - 1. The Greek words used in these verses
 - a. *chilia ete* means "thousand years"
 - b. Term "chiliasm" also sometimes used as theological term for "thousand years," but often carries pejorative sense.
 - 2. There are no other definite references to this period in the Bible.
 - 3. Some theological interpretations believe that other Biblical passages refer to the period of the millennium.
 - O.T. Isa. 9:6; 11:1-12:6; 52:7-12; Jer. 33:17-22; Ezek. 37:25; Zech 9:9

N.T. - Matt. 19:28; 25:31-46; Lk. 14:14; I Cor. 15:22; I Thess. 4:13-18 Other Biblical references to "thousand years"

Ps. 90:4 - "a thousand years in Thy sight are like yesterday..."

II Pet. 3:8 -"one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" Primary questions to be considered

- 1. Is the number of "a thousand" to be interpreted in a strict physical and temporal sense, or in a symbolic, figurative manner (as almost all of the other numbers in Revelation)?
- 2. Is the period of time designated "a thousand years" in Rev. 20 to be interpreted as prior to or subsequent to, the second advent of Jesus Christ?



- II. Historical review of millennial thinking in Christian theology.
 - A. Early church (c. 100-250) millennium not emphasized. Variety of views.
 - B. Early reaction to view of earthly millennium.
 - 1. Origen (c. 185-254) attributed such thinking to heretic, Cerinthus
 - 2. Montanist heresy (c.175) had excesses of earthly millennial views.
 - 3. Rampant speculation to calculate end time.
 - C. Augustine (354-430) rejected his previous earthly millennial position and interpreted "1000 years" of Rev. 20 as symbolic of entire period from first coming of Christ to second coming of Christ.
 - 1. Council of Ephesus (431) condemned earthly millennium
 - interpretation as heretical superstition.
 - 2. Became orthodox view of Church for centuries.
 - D. Reformation (sixteenth century) Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Anabaptists accepted symbolic interpretation of "1000 years." Regarded Catholic Pope as Antichrist.
 - E. Seventeenth nineteenth centuries gradually revived earthly millennium view.

- F. Nineteenth & twentieth centuries.
 - 1. J.N. Darby (Plymouth Brethren), followed by D.L. Moody, C.I. Scofield, H.A. Ironside (Dallas Theological Sem.), developed theological system of Dispensationalism incorporating earthly millennium and pre-tribulation rapture of Church. Became a primarily American theological phenomenon.
 - 2. Majority of theological community (Post-millennial and Amillennial) has regarded Dispensationalism as a modernist aberrational interpretation.
- III. Millennial interpretations



- Christ (Titus 2:13)
- B. Most interpretations can trace their roots to early Christian interpretation.
- C. "...now I know in part; then I shall fully understand" (I Cor. 13:12)
- D. Must not make any interpretation a test of faith or fellowship.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Important to maintain Christocentric emphasis.
- B. New covenant teaching always maintains balance between the "already" and the "not yet" fulfilment of the work of Jesus Christ.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE OF **BALANCED MILLENNIAL INTERPRETATION**

Already \leftarrow Not Yet

	Symbolic Historic Amillennialism Premillennialism	
Postmillennialism	Differentiation in interpretation is both hermeneutic and sequential: (1) whether the "thousand years" of Rev. 20 is to be interpreted as literal time period of 1000 years or as sym- bolic period of time. (2) whether the second coming of Christ precedes or is subsequent to this millennial period of time.	Dispensationalism
V	They are exegetically and hermenteutically similar in main- taining a balance of already/not yet.	\bigvee
<u>Historical emphasis.</u> Progressivist, accomplishment,	<u>Christocentric emphasis</u> that recognizes the fulfillment of God's promises in the new covenant in	<u>Futurist emphasis.</u> Expectancy.
process theology.	Jesus Christ.	Exegetical focus on Jews and future fulfillment of
Preterist. Existentialism. Historicism.	Jesus is fulfillment - II Cor 1:20 All sp. blessings - Eph. 1:3 Seated in heavenlies - Eph. 2:6	promise. Zionism.
Progressivism.	Sp. kingdom - Jn. 18:36; Phil. 3:20 Sp. truths are of necessity	Chronological economics. Dispensations of time, temporalism.
Tangibility Physicality	expressed in figurative and meta- phorical language: simile, parable, pictorial, analogy, allegorical. Space/time constructs.	Tangibility Physicality
Approach to present: Optimism, oppor- tunism, progressiv- ism, reconstruction-	<u>Approach to present:</u> Balance of inaugurated/antici- pated. "The enigma of the interim"	Approach to present: Pessimism, fatalism, survivalism, escapism, speculation of future,
ism, existentialism. A - Arid orthodoxy, status-quo.	Discipleship, maturation, growth, appreciation of Christ's life, testing, tribulation, sufficiency of God's grace; Christ's life works, no matter how tough the going gets. Facing the counterfeit of religion. Hope of consummation and perfec- tion.	apocalypticism. "Present is the pits" Parenthesis theory.
	Realism Spiritual understanding	