



# The Sword & The Plow

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## Bimillennialism

*A Contemporary-Historical Analysis of Revelation's Millennia*

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There are two basic interpretative models of Revelation twenty current among full Preterists. The probable majority hold to a view first advanced by Max King. This view says that Revelation's millennium (singular) refers to the "transition period" between the cross and second coming. King thus coined the phrase "transmillennial," obtained a trade mark for it from the U.S. government, and it continues to be the private property of King's ministry to this day.

King's view is simply a version of Augustine's Postmillennialism. Postmillennialism says that the millennium represents a symbolic period beginning with Christ's earthly ministry until the world's end sometime in the future. According to Augustine, the dragon is bound by the gospel of Christ; the martyrs and confessors represent

those who have been regenerated by obedience to the gospel.<sup>1</sup> King's model differs from Augustine's only in that it foreshortens the long ages and futurism of Postmillennialism, squeezing them into the forty-odd year period ending at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The single greatest obstacle the Augustine/King view presents to this writer's mind is that the symbolism is incongruous with the interpretation, which makes those beheaded for the testimony of Christ represent individuals who have experienced baptismal regeneration and thus "died with Christ." Can we really believe that beheading represents regeneration? For that matter, if the dragon was bound beginning with

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, XX, vi; Loeb ed.

Christ's earthly ministry, when and how did the martyrs die? John says they died for their testimony of Christ (v. 4). This means they died sometime *after* Christ's earthly ministry. How does this square with the idea that the dragon was bound beginning with Christ's ministry? Doesn't the fact the saints have suffered martyrdom require that the dragon have first been loosed? Can someone bound in prison kill innocent victims who are free at large? If not, doesn't this mean that the 1000-year binding of the dragon ends *before* the 1000-year reign of the martyrs begins? We think so, and therefore have settled upon an entirely different view, which we call "Bimillennialism."

### Two Millennial Periods

We said before that so long as the dragon remained bound in prison, he could not bring about the persecution of the saints, and that therefore the 1000-year binding of the dragon necessarily ended before the 1000-year reign of the martyrs began. But if the one ends before the other begins, they obviously cannot be the same period. Thus, there are two millennial periods contemplated by the text. With this agrees Joseph Bengel, Thomas Brightman, A. E. Koch, Jim Millay, Daniel Steele, and Anglican Reformer, John Wesley, among others, who see two millennial periods in the text, rather than the traditional one:

*"It must be observed, that two distinct thousand years are mentioned throughout this whole passage. Each is mentioned thrice; the thousand wherein Satan is bound, verses 2, 3, 7; the thousand wherein the saints shall reign, verses 4-6. The former end before the end of the world; the latter reach to the general resurrection. So that the beginning and end of the former thousand is before the beginning and end of the latter."*<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, most explanations produce two millennia if we but take the time to analyze them closely. For example, King's model says that the binding of the dragon began with Christ's ministry (Matt. 12:29) and ended when the Jews' war with Rome broke out. Thus, this 1000-year period runs from A.D. 30-A.D. 67. But the reign of the saints

King says begins with their participation in Christ's resurrection by baptism starting at Pentecost, and ends at the general resurrection. Thus, this 1000-year period runs from A.D. 33-A.D.70. They do not match! If they do not begin and end at the same point, then it is axiomatic that they are not the same 1000- years! In fact, Augustine, the so-called father of Postmillennialism, also admitted that the thousand year periods do not match (and therefore cannot be the same 1000 years):

*"This last persecution by Antichrist will last for three years and six months, as we have already said, and as is stated both in the Apocalypse and by the prophet Daniel. Though this time is brief, it is rightly debated whether it belongs to the thousand years during which it is said that the devil is bound and the saints reign with Christ, or whether this short span is to be added to those years and is over and above them. For if we say that it belongs to the thousand years, then it will be found that **the reign of the saints with Christ extends not for the same length of time as the binding of the devil, but for a longer time...**How, then does Scripture include in **the same limit of a thousand years** both the binding of the devil and the reign of the saints, if the binding of the devil is to cease three years and six months **before** the reign of a thousand years of the saints with Christ?"*<sup>3</sup>

Notice that Augustine admits that the binding of the dragon and reign of the saints cannot be enclosed within the same 1000-years, and that they extend "not for the same length of time." As with King's model, they do not match! If they do not match, they cannot be the same. No matter which way we cut it, two millennial periods emerge from the text.

### Meaning of the Symbolism

So much for the fact of two millennial periods, what does the symbolism mean? Let us begin with the observation that both the dragon and the saints/martyrs are physically dead. The saints have been beheaded for their testimony of Christ (v. 4) and the dragon, together with its alter ego,

<sup>2</sup> John Wesley, *Commentary on Revelation, in loc.*

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, XX, xiii; Loeb ed.

the beast, has received a mortal wound to its head (Rev. 13:3, 12) and has descended to the place of the dead. But if both have experienced physical death, then both are in Hades. The dragon, being wicked, is in the place assigned for the damned; the saints, being justified, are in the place assigned for the saved. John describes the dragon as being bound with a great chain (v. 1). This is the identical imagery used by Peter to describe the “angels” that sinned (probably the “sons of God” (faithful) who apostatized by marrying the daughters of unbelieving men – Gen. 6:2), and were cast down to Hades Tartarus, where they were held in chains until the judgment:

*“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Gk. Tartarus), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” II Pet. 2:4*

This is the true source of John’s imagery, not Matt. 12:29. John is telling us that the dragon and beast suffered death in the mortal wound they received, and were thus bound in Tartarus (bottomless pit) for 1000-years. The martyrs likewise have suffered death, and have entered into a 1000-year rest pending the general, Hadean resurrection. John describes this same group of martyrs in chapter fourteen, saying, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13; cf. vv. 9-12). We know that the martyrs died in the persecution under the beast; when did the dragon and beast die?

### **Death and Resurrection of the Dragon and Beast**

John tells us that the beast received a mortal wound to one of its heads, but that its wound healed, and thus arose to persecute the church again (Rev. 13:3, 14). John also says that beast ascends from the bottomless pit to make war with the saints (Rev. 11:7; 17:8, 14). Thus, the healing of the wound marks the point at which it revives and ascends from the place of the dead, and persecutes the church. But if persecution marks the life of the beast, then what is the death of the beast but the cessation of persecution? Where did the beast receive the mortal wound? There are only two persecutions in Revelation, one in chapter twelve, which was past when John wrote, and one beginning in chapter thirteen, that

was about to break out. The persecution in chapter twelve followed closely upon the ascension of the “Man-child” (Christ) and therefore may be identified as the great persecution under Caiaphas, Pilate and Saul (Paul) that arose over Stephen (A.D. 34-38). The dragon and beast went down to death in defeat when this persecution collapsed; they ascend again in chapter thirteen in the persecution under Nero.

Thus, the dragon (and beast) was bound during the period from the collapse of the persecution over Stephen until the persecution under Nero. This is the period during which Claudius was upon the throne, enforcing the “*religio licita*,” which extended protection of law to the national religions of the peoples of the Roman Empire. Christianity was deemed a sect of Judaism, and as Judaism was protected, so was Christianity. Claudius even banished the Jews for disturbing the *Pax Romana* by their incessant riots and tumults against the Christians in Rome (Acts 18:2; Suetonius, *Claudius* XXV, 4). This protection reached even to the first 10 years of Nero’s rule, when he was a youth under the guardianship and tutelage of Seneca and Burris. But with the burning of Rome, the Christians were made a scapegoat for the emperor’s crimes, and the first imperial persecution broke out (A.D. 64-68). Revelation was written on the threshold of this persecution. John thus describes the beast, saying, “it was and is not and is *about to* ascend out of the bottomless pit” (Rev. 17:8). The release of the dragon in Rev. 20:7 is the point when the persecution under Nero breaks out.

This interpretation is consistent with what we read elsewhere in the New Testament. The Thessalonians were in fear that the eschatological gathering into the kingdom by martyrdom was at hand (II Thess. 2:1), but Paul assured them that someone and something was restraining the fanatical hatred of the Jews (the “mystery of iniquity”) and the Roman power (vv. 6, 7). This restraint thus answers the binding of Rev. 20:1-3, and represents the political stability that obtained during the reign of Claudius, but which was almost spent by the close of Acts, shortly before Paul fell as a martyr under Nero. The late Canon of Westminster, F.W. Farrar, could thus write:

*“St. Paul, when he wrote from Corinth to the Thessalonians, had indeed seen in the fabric of Roman polity, and in*

*Claudius, its reigning representative, the “check” and the “checker” which must be removed before the coming of the Lord.”<sup>4</sup>*

### Whence the 1000-Years?

This accounts for Revelation’s imagery based upon the historical situation existing at the time it was written. What about the symbolism of the 1000-years, how do we explain it? In a letter recorded by Eusebius, Dionysius of Alexandria alludes to Rev. 20:4, saying,

*“The divine martyrs themselves among us, who now are assessors of Christ, and share the fellowship of His kingdom, and take part in His decisions and judge along with Him.”<sup>5</sup>*

From this epistle we learn that the early church believed that the martyrs were alive in Paradise and in some form or manner reigned there with Christ. Greeks and Romans believed that the dead lived in Hades 1,000 years, after which they were restored to earthly life. In his epic poem, the *Aeneid*, Virgil causes his lead character, Aeneas, a survivor of the Trojan war and legendary founder of Rome, to descend to the nether world, where his deceased father describes the 1,000-year sojourn of the soul in Hades:

*Yes, not even when the last flicker of life has left us, does evil, or the ills that the flesh is heir to, quite relinquish our souls; it must be that many a taint grows deeply, mysteriously grained in their being from long contact with the body. Therefore the dead are disciplined in purgatory, and pay the penalty of old evil: some hang, stretched to the blast of vacuum winds; for others, the stain of sin is washed away in a vast whirlpool or cauterized with fire. Each of us finds in the next world his own level: a few of us are later released to wander at will through broad Elysium, the Happy Fields; until, in the fulness of time, the ages have purged that ingrown stain, and nothing is left but pure ethereal sentience and the spirit’s essential flame. All these souls, when they have finished*

*their thousand-year cycle, God sends for, and they come in crowds to the river Lethe, so, you see, with memory washed out, they may revisit the earth above and begin to wish to be born again.<sup>6</sup>*

Revelation was written to Greek and Latin speaking Gentiles in Asia Minor who would almost certainly have associated the millennia of Revelation Twenty with Hades. The connection of the passage with Greco-Roman notions of Hades was noted by the famous French skeptic, Voltaire:

*The belief in this reign of a thousand years was long prevalent among the Christians. This period was also in great credit among the Gentiles. The souls of the Egyptians returned to their bodies at the end of a thousand years; and, according to Virgil, the souls in purgatory were exorcised for the same space of time—et mille per annos.<sup>7</sup>*

If a learned skeptic recognized the connection between John’s imagery and ancient notions of Hades, it is difficult to imagine that contemporary Christians of Greek descent could fail to see it also. Indeed, the epistle of Dionysius of Alexandria quoted above stands as testimony that in fact they did.

This does not mean that imagery of the 1000-years derives exclusively from Greek mythology. Ps. 90:4 and II Pet. 3:8 also use the 1000-year model to distinguish time in the spiritual realm from earthly time. Thus, Greek, Roman, and scriptural sources agree that the basic point of the 1000-years is “other worldly.”

### Conclusion

Revelations millennia (two) describe the intermediate realm of Hades where the dragon went down in defeat upon the collapse of the persecution over Stephen, to rise again in the persecution under Nero, but where the saints and martyrs dwelt in happiness pending the general, Hadean resurrection.

<sup>4</sup> F.W. Farrar, *The Early Days of Christianity* (1891, Columbian Publishing Co, NY), p. 13; cf. *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, Excursus XIX, (1879, Cassell and Co. ed), p. 726.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* VI, xlii, 5; Loeb ed.

<sup>6</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, lines 735-51; C. Day Lewis ed; cf. Plato, *Republic*, X, 614

<sup>7</sup> *The Works of Voltaire*, Vol. III, sec. 1 (1764, Philosophical Dictionary, Part I)

# What Happened in AD 70? What Happened at the Cross?

## What Happened at the Cross:

All of the following accrued to the immediate benefit of men from and after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. AD 70 was irrelevant in terms of man's salvation from the power of sin: Our glory is all the cross!

**Atonement was made in full:** *"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we **have now received** the atonement" (Rom. 5:11). [The verb tense is perfect, showing completed action in the past.]*

**The debt of sin was expunged:** *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Col. 2:14). [Here the verb tense is historical present, showing what happened at the cross: viz., the debt of sin was blotted out.]*

**Sins were remitted:** *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).*

**Sins were washed away:** *"And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16) [If sins are washed away in baptism, it is clear nobody need wait until AD 70 for salvation from sin!]*

**Men were reconciled to God:** *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now **hath he reconciled** in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Col. 1:21, 22). [Verb tense is perfect, showing completed action in the past.]*

**The Old Testament was annulled:** *"For there is verily a **disannulling of the commandment going before** for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect...which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Heb. 7:17, 19; 9:10). **Having abolished** in his flesh the enmity, even **the law of commandments contained in ordinances**" (Eph. 2:15).*

**Believers were freed from all obligation to the Old Testament:** *"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not*

*under the law" (Gal. 5:18). [Not under law. What part of this would any man dare deny?]*

**Circumcision, the Temple Ritual, and Ceremonial Law Legally Terminated:** *"Let no man therefore judge you meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (Col. 2:16; cf. Gal. 4:9, 10).*

**New Testament became of force:** *"For a testament is of force **after men are dead**: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:17).*

**The New Testament replaced the Old Testament:** *"He **taketh away the first**, that he may **establish the second**. By the which will we are sanctified by the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:9, 10). [No man can have two testaments in force at the same time. The Old Testament was removed at the cross so that the New Testament could come into force.]*

**Spiritual resurrection (acquittal from guilt) occurred at conversion:** *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **hath he quickened** together with him, **having forgiven** you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). [Note: if spiritual resurrection to heaven (Eph. 1:20; 2:6) occurs at conversion, why do some say this did not occur until AD 70?]*

**The veil of sin separating man from God was removed:** *"And, behold, the veil of the temple was **rent in twain** from the top to the bottom" (Matt. 27:51).*

**Saints admitted into legal & covenantal presence of God:** *"Having therefore, brethren, **boldness to enter** into the holiest by the blood of Jesus...**Let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:19, 22).*

**Men stood perfect and complete before God:** *"For by one offering he **hath perfected for ever** them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14). [Verb tense is perfect, showing completed action in the past. Who, reading this, would dare assert that man was under the debt of sin until AD 70?]*

## What Happened in AD 70:

AD 70 was a time of eschatological judgment and wrath, as Jesus took up his reign from the right hand of

God, putting his enemies beneath his feet, including Hadean death.

**The kingdom came in power:** *“Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power” (Mk. 9:1).* [“Coming in power” signifies Christ asserting his dominion by irresistible force.]

**The world entered a time of judgment:** *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained” (Acts 17:31).*

**Jesus demonstrated his omnipotence and divinity:** *“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the **appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ**: Which in his times **he shall shew**, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (I Tim. 6:14-16).*

**Christ came in judgment upon Daniel’s “little horn” [Nero]:** *“And I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; **until the Ancient of days came** and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Dan. 7:21, 22; cf. II Thess. 2:3-9).*

**The image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream was broken to pieces:** *“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44; cf. Ps. 2:8, 9).*

**The political powers of the heathen were subjected to Christ:** *“I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen” (Hagg. 2:21, 22).* [The “heavens and earth” are symbols for the social and political elements of the world.]

**The Jewish nation was destroyed:** *“That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Matt. 23:35).*

**The Hadean resurrection occurred:** *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,*

*some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt...and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished” (Dan. 12:2, 7; cf. Rev. 11:15-19).*

## What did *Not* Happen in AD 70

**Question:** Does the fact that some prophecies and promises contained in the Old Testament scriptures were not fulfilled until AD 70 mean the ceremonial law was still valid, binding, and obligatory?

**Answer:** No. The shadow ends where the body begins; the body is of Christ (Col.2:17). The temple ritual was a prophetic type and foreshadow, pointing to the sacrifice of Jesus. Once Jesus came and fulfilled the law’s demand, the law ceased. Not ONE verse can be produced showing the Old Testament was binding from and after the cross. To the contrary, whole books (e.g., Galatians and Hebrews) are devoted to the subject that men were NOT to obey the ritual and ceremony of the Old law, including circumcision, which was the very essence of the Old Testament. If circumcision was annulled, the whole ceremonial law was annulled.

Prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and wrath upon the nations did not derive their validity from the law. God was perfectly competent to remove the ceremonial law and old covenant, and still visit wrath upon the Jews and Gentiles who rejected the gospel and persecuted the church. Indeed, it is **the very fact that the Jews insisted the law was still valid and had to be kept that marked them as God’s enemies.**

*“He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb as is he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense as if he blessed an idol. Yet, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called none did answer; when I spake they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, and that cast you out for my name’s sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies” (Isa. 66:3-6).*

# Objections to the “Transmillennial” and Other Models

The millennia of Revelation are an extremely challenging symbol to understand. The millennial model most popularly embraced by Preterists today is that of Max King, which states that there is but one millennium, and that it represents the “transition period” between the two covenants. We here offer objections to the model held by the probable majority of Preterists.

## **The Transmillennial Model is a Single Millennium Model**

King’s model calls for a single millennial period. Yet, King himself described two millennia in Revelation twenty:

*“These two one thousand years periods are like the North and South Poles – the distance of the North pole from the equator is also the distance of the south Pole from the equator. The opposite or extreme points, the binding of the Satan and the reigning of the Saints, were reached in the middle of the seventieth week.”*<sup>8</sup>

So, King clearly saw two *opposing* one thousand years periods in the text. There is a thousand year binding of the dragon, and there is a thousand year reign of the saints, just as unique as the North Pole is from the South Pole. King, however, failed to follow up on this observation, and reverted to the single millennium model, defining the reign of the saints by the binding of the dragon. But the single millennium model makes no sense at all. The dragon is loosed before the general resurrection, to begin the battle of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-11). But the reign of the saints – the first resurrection - does not end until the 2<sup>nd</sup>, general resurrection when the souls were delivered from Hades. Thus, the “thousand year” periods do not match! The one begins and ends before the other starts. If they do not match, then they cannot possibly be the same period, nor can the reign of the saints be defined by the binding of the dragon.

## **The Transmillennial Model Makes the Bottomless Pit in Rev. 20 Incongruous with its Usage elsewhere in Revelation**

According to King (which he borrows from Augustine), the *keys* of the bottomless pit in Rev. 20

are the *cross and gospel* of Christ – Preaching the gospel binds the dragon. It binds the dragon because when the truth is preached allegedly he cannot deceive. This of course is not true; the gospel is preached today, but billions of people are deceived. But let us assume for purposes of argument that preaching the gospel somehow binds the dragon. If the keys are the cross and gospel in chapter 20, what are they in chapter 9? In Chapter Nine the *abomination of desolation* rises out of the bottomless pit when a fallen star or angel who has the keys of the bottomless pit, releases them. All Preterists agree that the invasion of the locust army is the Roman invasion of Palestine. All remark that the five months the locusts are given to torment men corresponds with the length of the siege of Jerusalem. They are likened to scorpions, corresponding to the name given the Roman catapults used during the siege. But if the keys of the bottomless pit in Rev. 9 symbolize power over the Roman empire and its legions, how can they represent the cross and gospel of Christ in Rev. 20?

The angel who has the keys and releases the locusts in Rev. 9 is said to be their “king.” Chapter 17 says there are *seven kings* – five were *fallen*, one *is* and another was *yet to come*. (Rev. 17:10) The one who “is” when John wrote was Nero, the 6<sup>th</sup> emperor. Nero held the keys of the Roman empire and it fell to him to command the legions of Rome and loose its armies. If an emperor of Rome holds the keys in Rev. 9, their possessor in Rev. 20 is almost surely an emperor also; *to wit*: Claudius. By no stretch of the furthest imagination can the keys be interpreted as the cross and gospel of Christ.

## **Makes Language of Martyrdom Language of Regeneration**

The language of the first resurrection speaks of those *martyred* under the dragon and the beast. To make beheading and martyrdom a symbol for regeneration – for repentance & baptism - is hard to grasp and stretches the language of the passage further than it is wont to go. Revelation was written to the church standing upon the threshold of the eschatological crisis called the great tribulation, when the church would suffer near universal martyrdom. The point of the imagery is to comfort the church by assuring them God had prepared a place of rest for them pending the general resurrection. Paul spoke to this same issue in I Thess. 4:13, when he said he would not have the Thessalonians ignorant concerning them that had fallen asleep, that “ye sorrow not, even as other which have no hope.” Likewise, Rev. 14:13 pronounces a blessing

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<sup>8</sup> Max R. King, *Spirit of Prophecy* (1971, Warren OH), p. 347.

upon those that would suffer martyrdom under the beast, saying, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” Those that died in the Lord are the same as those portrayed living and reigning with Christ in Rev. 20:3-6. It is nonsensical to say that Rev. 20 is describing regeneration.

### **Applies Language and Time-Models of the Spiritual Realm to Earth**

The symbolism of the dragon being bound in the “bottomless pit” is universally agreed to represent Hades Tartarus or Hell. I know of no one who contradicts this. Thus, all concur that Hades or Hell is in view in Rev. 20:1-3. It is an undeniable fact that Greeks and Romans believed that the souls in Hades were raised/born anew after 1,000 years, which corroborates this view. Thus, the 1,000 years speak to the time during which the dragon was “dead” in Hades Tartarus. Similarly, the souls under the altar in v. 4 are almost universally agreed to be in the spiritual realm, or interim place of the dead. No one went to heaven (except Christ) before the general resurrection. Hence, Hades Paradise is the ONLY place these souls can be. Since, it is an undeniable fact that the Greeks and Romans believed souls were in Hades 1,000 years, this interpretation is fully corroborated. The whole chapter is thus involved in the resurrection from Hades. The dragon was symbolically bound in Hades Tartarus and would rise again to persecute the church. The souls of the martyrs are in Hades Paradise and will rise from there at the general resurrection depicted in vv. 11-15.

Despite the overarching theme of “resurrection from Hades” that pervades the chapter, the Transmillennial view imports living saints into the text. It says that some of those depicted in v. 4 are actually the *church on earth*. Proponents of this view point to language of regeneration in passages like Eph. 2:1, 2, 6, in which those “dead in sins” are “raised up” and made to “sit together” with Christ in heavenly places. The problem with applying this language to Rev. 20:4 is that Ephesians places those “raised up” *in heaven*, not Hades (Eph. 1:20; 2:6). Moreover, it says we are seated together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*. In other words, Paul is not saying the saints on earth are actually in heaven (an obvious fact that needed no clarification!). What he is saying is that Jesus’ humanity means that in his ascension to the right hand of God, all believers are represented there by him. Jesus is there, and we appear before the throne *by and through* him. More to the point, however, there simply is no contextual justification for importing issues and concepts of regeneration from sin into a passage about

martyrdom under the beast, or a chapter whose pervading theme is resurrection from Hades.

### **Transmillennial Model Assumes the Dragon is a Supernatural, Demonic Being**

Augustinian Postmillennialism and King’s Transmillennialism both assume that the dragon of Revelation is a supernatural, semi-omnipotent, omnipresent, demonic being. Yet, Revelation is a book of symbols. The dragon in Revelation is not a demonic being, but Leviathan, a symbol for the world civil power at war with Christ and his church. In the OT the dragon variously symbolized Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon (Isa. 14:29; 51:9; Ezek. 29:3). In Revelation, the dragon is Imperial Rome; its seven heads and ten horns represent the division of empire’s political powers. The seven heads are the seven emperors that reigned unto the final consummation: Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, and Galba. Nero was reigning when Revelation was written. (Rev. 17:10) The ten horns are the ten senatorial provinces created by Augustus in 27 BC. Interpreting the symbols in reference to a demonic being deprives the book of sense and renders it unintelligible. All agree that the beast, false prophet, and harlot are symbols for world civil powers and political movements. Why should the dragon be any different? Rev. 20:10 has the dragon thrown into the lake of fire, Gehenna, the second death. Yet, the same fate was suffered by the Harlot, the false prophet, and the beast (Rev. 19:20, 21). If the former describe the fall of political powers aligned against God, what basis is there for interpreting the dragon and its destruction differently?

### **The Saints do not Start Reigning until the Dragon is Loosed**

This is the most obvious error of the traditional interpretation. A prisoner bound in prison cannot attack or harm those outside. Thus, in order for the martyrs to come under attack and die, the dragon must first be loosed! This clearly prevents the reign of the martyrs from being simultaneous with the binding of the dragon. The better view, therefore, is that it is at the point where the dragon is loosed that the persecution under Nero began and the martyrs died and thus entered into their 1,000-year Hadean reign. The dragon and beast received a mortal wound in the persecution that collapsed in chapter twelve. They went to Hades Tartarus (symbolically) where they were bound until the time the wound healed, and they revived to persecute the church anew under Nero. Those beheaded for not receiving the mark of the beast are those that die under Nero’s persecution, which means that their reign follows the loosing of the dragon.

### **The Transmillennial Model Assumes Facts not in Evidence**

The idea that there was a “transition” between two covenants is a mistake. The Old Testament ended at the cross. Period. There is not a single verse that can be brought forward to contradict this. The Mosaic Age may have lingered on, and the teaching and traditions of the church and gospel have been gradually revealed until full, but the legal validity of the Old Law and its institutions died when the New Testament came into force at Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. Thus, the very notion underlying “transmillennialism” is erroneous. How can the millennium represent a transition period that did not exist?

### **Rabbinic Teaching Not Source of Millennial Imagery**

Another variation upon the millennium interprets it as pointing to the “reign of the Messiah.” This view asserts that the source of the imagery is Rabbinic and Pseudo-epigraphical, and that these sources taught that the Messiah would reign alternately 40 years and 1000 years. But the Gentiles churches of Asia to whom the Apocalypse was addressed would not have been familiar with Rabbinic sources, and the Jews themselves rejected the Pseudo-epigrapha as profane forgeries. Thus, it is highly improbable that the Gentiles of Asia Minor could be expected to understand John’s imagery based upon such highly obscure and questionable sources. Besides, Rabbinic notions about the Messiah were notoriously false, and led the Jews to crucify the Lord. Was the Lord to reign only 40 years, or even 1,000 years? No. His reign is forever (Isa. 9:7; Rev. 11:15). Hence, the 1,000 = 40 years model is erroneous upon its face in limiting the eternal reign of Christ.

The saints in Rev. 20:4 are dead; they are martyrs in Hades where they are waiting the general resurrection. They are victorious in death and thus live and reign with Christ for the 1,000 year period which symbolized the spiritual state of the intermediate realm.

### **Conclusion**

These are a few of the more obvious objections to the majority view presently espoused among Preterists.

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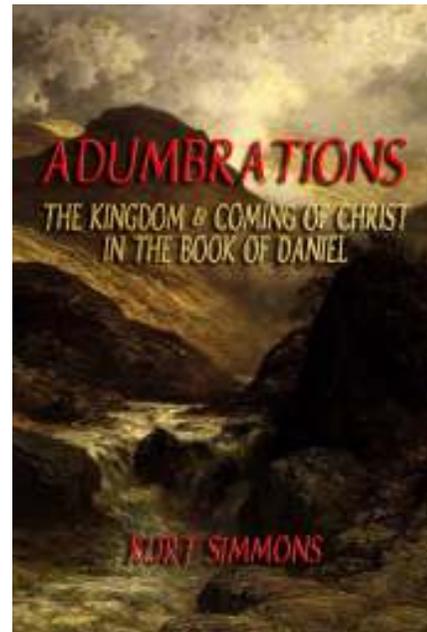
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**Jesus Nazaret Rex Iudaeorum**

# The Nativity Poem

By Kurt Simmons

*Note: This brief poem provides a chronological account from scripture and history, showing the birth of Christ would have occurred Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, as the church has traditionally maintained.*

Did Mary travail, was our Lord born,  
While yet it was night, before it was morn?  
Whilst shepherds flocks watched, but other men slept,  
This day that men long centuries have kept?  
Do we well the Lord's birth to remember,  
Year by year the twenty-fifth of December?

Fear not, good Christian men, be not afraid,  
It was surely this night when it was said,  
"Unto the sons of earth is born this day,  
He whom prophets foretold and saints did pray.  
And, lo, this a sign unto you shall be,  
The babe in a manger in David's city."

The truth of this day may surely be known,  
From what the Jewish historian hath shown.  
About the time of our dear Savior's birth,  
When the Roman people governed the earth,  
Judea was ruled by Herod the Great,  
And Rome's eagle was atop the temple gate,  
Wrongly informed that king Herod was dead,  
Fanatical Jews took it into their head,  
The Roman eagle to take from its place,  
Thought thus to remove their nation's disgrace.  
Their duty to God they thought it to be  
To remove the offending effigy.  
For casting the eagle onto the ground,  
King Herod had the rebel's seized and bound.  
Some into prison cast, others reserved,  
For greater crimes, greater punishment deserve.  
Since in the king's death they took great delight,  
He burned them alive and repaid them with spite.  
The night he slew the condemned rabbis,  
A lunar eclipse occurred in the skies.  
A celestial sign in 1 B.C.  
Appeared in heaven for all men to see.  
January tenth this portent was sent  
A heavenly sign to mark the event

Meantime the holy family doth wait,  
Burnt offering to lay on altar grate.  
The law imposed forty days' quarantine  
Before new mothers were ritually clean.  
For their cleansing, sacrifice they must make,  
Unto the temple their offering take.  
Mary's time fulfilled, her gifts presented,  
Her prayers for the Babe by angels attended,  
Are carried to God with incense scented.

Her sacrifice made, they return home  
To Nazareth in Galilee they come.  
A few weeks more and the Magi appear,  
By a star they are led and thus draw near.  
They're warned to return home another way,  
For Herod will seek the child to slay.  
To Egypt the holy family makes flight,  
Mother and child escape in the night.  
Warned not to return 'till Herod is dead,  
Joseph obeys what the angel has said.

A few months pass, Herod's health fast declines  
'Neath the weight of his sins his body repines.  
Word then arrives from Augustus Caesar  
That king Herod may slay Antipater.  
Who, although he's the king's favorite son,  
Lay bound in prison for treason he'd done.  
To poison his father and seize his throne,  
Antipater with his life must atone.  
Herod relents, his life he would spare,  
To slay his own son, what father would dare?  
Then rumor breaks out that the king is deceased,  
Antipater offers bribes to be released.  
The jailer brings word to the ailing king,  
Declaiming a son that would do such a thing.  
The king in a rage orders his head sent,  
Blood begat blood for Herod the tyrant.

He joins his son's death to multitudes more,  
Mothers cry out and God's vengeance implore.  
To protect his throne, earth with blood watered,  
Bethlehem's poor Innocents are slaughtered.  
To Augustus, Macrobius doth relate  
Antipater's and the Innocents' fate.  
Caesar jokes "Herod's pig 'tis better be,  
Than Herod's son or his near family."  
Herod survived his son only five days,  
Then to judgment went for his evil ways.  
A few weeks more and Passover comes roun',  
Archelaus doth don his father's gold crown.  
In Egypt Joseph learns that Herod has died,  
To Judea comes, but doth turn aside.  
They go to Nazareth of Galilee  
Where Jesus abides till his ministry.  
For though the serpent himself is now dead,  
One of his brood doth reign in his stead.

From this account we are able to see

The succession of events in history;  
 And to assign chronologically,  
 Proper place to the Lord's nativity.  
 Reckoning aright Christ's birth will occur  
 'Bout winter solstice in late December.

Did Mary travail, was our Lord born,  
 While yet it was night, before it was morn?  
 Whilst shepherds flocks watched, but other men slept,  
 This day that men long centuries have kept?  
 Do we well the Lord's birth to remember,  
 Year by year the twenty-fifth of December?

Fear not, good Christian men, be not afraid,  
 It was surely this night when it was said,  
 "Unto the sons of earth is born this day,  
 He whom prophets foretold and saints did pray.  
 And, lo, this a sign unto you shall be,  
 The babe in a manger in David's city."

The truth of this day may further be known  
 For St. Luke in his gospel there hath shown  
 His thirtieth year it was the threshold,  
 When to be baptized Lord Jesus made bold,  
 Three years and a half ere shedding his blood,  
 The Savior was covered 'neath Jordan's flood.  
 Forty-two months before Calvary's Passion,  
 The Lord was buried in watery fashion;  
 To the Baptist came in early November,  
 Forty-odd days before the twenty-fifth of December.

A forty-day fast He then undertook,  
 Himself to prepare, food and water forsook.  
 Then by the devil he was tempted sore  
 The lusts of the flesh about seven days more.  
 Thus to his birthday at length does he come  
 When the Master his ministry begun

For thirty years Jewish men must attain  
 Before the office of Rabbi maintain  
 The years of manhood they must acquire  
 If a teacher to be they do aspire.  
 He returns to John, his first disciples to make;  
 Phillip and Andrew from the Baptist doth take.  
 Phillip findeth Nathaniel and bringeth him too,  
 Peter, destined to be chief, is brought by Andrew.  
 They call him "Rabbi", by which we may see  
 That Jesus hath already turned thirty.

They go to Cana where a wedding will be,  
 The miracle marked by Epiphany.  
 January sixth this feast e'er hath been  
 From which observance it may be seen:  
 His birthday following hard on his fast  
 Not sixty days from the Lord's baptism elapsed  
 Until the feast of Epiphany hath past.  
 And within this narrow frame of time  
 Occurs the Nativity of thy Lord and mine.

Did Mary travail, was our Lord born  
 While yet it was night, before it was morn?  
 Whilst shepherds flocks watched, but other men slept,  
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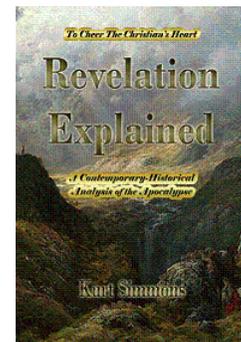
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 The babe in a manger in David's city."

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## Preterism India



Joel Saripalli is a native missionary and Preterist. Joel has been instrumental in starting twenty churches. Joel is undertaking the work of translating our *Revelation Explained* into *Hindi*, the national language of India, and into the local dialect of *Telugu*. This commentary is a simple and concise explanation of Revelation from



a fulfilled eschatology perspective. At only 65 pages, it covers all the difficult issues, is an easy read, and can be priced for mass distribution. Please help us pay for printing and distribution of this important work in India. Make a donation today!

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