

SOURCE READINGS ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE MILLENNIUM

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I The Truth about the Millennium was unanimously accepted all over the ancient world prior to the 4th Century A.D.

Ante-Nicene  
U.I  
P. 146

PSA. 90:4  
2 PET. 3:12

Alexandria: Epistle of Barnabas - fl. A.D. 70 - 130?  
Ch. 15 "...The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation: 'And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the 7th day, and rested on it, and sanctified it' (Gen. 2:2). Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, 'He finished in six days'. This implieth that the Lord will finish all things in 6000 years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifieth saying, 'Behold, today will be as a thousand years'. Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in 6000 years, all things will be finished. 'And He rested on the 7th day.' This meaneth: when His Son, coming (again), shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the 7th day." ...

Ante-Nicene  
U.I  
P. 153

Ante-Nicene  
U.I  
P. 563

Hierapolis (Phrygia): Fragments of Papias (A.D. 70-155?)  
Was bishop of church in Hierapolis, first half of the 2nd Century, a hearer and disciple of the Apostle John, was on intimate terms with many who had known Christ and His Apostles. A companion of Polycarp?

(Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 5, Ch. 33, mentions 4th Book of Papias which dealt with the Millennium condition.)

Vol 1  
p 295

\* ✓ The following is from Eusebius' Hist. Eccl., Book 3, Chapter 39, in which he tries to disqualify the authority of Papias. Eusebius of Caesarea

"The same writer (Papias) gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and some other more mythical things. To these belong his statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the (first) resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. I suppose he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures. For he appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses."

Ante-Nicene  
U.I  
P. 239-240

(Rome: Justin Martyr, a Gentile, born in Samaria, A.D. 100 - 167? Dialogue With Trypho, chap. 80: "I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare."

p. 240

✓ He wrongly applies Isaiah 65 to prove this. However, he says in chapter 81 that, "We have perceived, moreover, that the expression, 'The day of the Lord is as a thousand years,' is connected with this subject. And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ,

who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place."

Anti-Nicene  
v. 1

P. 557

v.

Lyons: Irenaeus, A.D. 120 - 202?, bishop of Lyons, Against Heresies, Book 5, chapter 28: "For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the scripture says: 'Thus the heaven and the earth were founded, and all the heaven and their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the 6th day the works that He had made, and God rested upon the 7th day from all His works.' This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the 6th thousand year."

P. 562

v.

Chapter 33: "These (rewards) are to take place in the times of the Kingdom, that is, upon the 7th day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation."

Anti-Nicene  
v. III

P. 342

v.

Carthage: Tertullian, A.D. 145 - 220?, Against Marcion, Book 3, chapter 25: "But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence: inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem, ..."

Anti-Nicene  
v. 5

P. 179

f.

Rome: Hippolytus, A.D. 170 - 236?, Greek disciple of Irenaeus. The following is from The Commentary on Daniel: "And 6000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day 'on which God rested from all His works.' For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they 'shall reign with Christ', when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse: for 'a day with the Lord is as a thousand years'. Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that 6000 years must be fulfilled."

Anti-Nicene  
v. 6

P. 347

g.

South Asia Minor: Methodius, A.D. 260-312?, bishop of Olympus and Patara in Lycia, antagonist of Origen, The Banquet of the Ten Virgins, Discourse 9, chapter 5: "For I also, ... celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath."

Anti-Nicene  
v. 7

P. 254

h.

Gaul: Lactantius, A.D. 260-330? The Epitome of the Divine Institutes, chapter 72: "Therefore peace being made, and every evil suppressed, that righteous King and Conqueror will institute a great judgment on the earth respecting the living and the dead, and will deliver all the nations into subjection to the righteous who are alive, and will raise the righteous dead to eternal life, and will Himself reign with them on the earth, and will build the holy city, and this kingdom of the righteous shall be for a thousand years."

1. Rome: Victorinus, early 4th Century, On the Creation of the World (fragment): "...that true Sabbath will be in the seventh millenary of years, when Christ with His elect shall reign."

## II Early Opponents to the Millennial Doctrine

- Vol. I  
p. 263
- ✓ a. Caius, A.D. 180-217? Presbyter of Rome, wrote against the heretic Cerinthus who was regarded by some as the author of Revelation. This is recorded in Eusebius' Church History, Book 3, p. 26, chapter 28: "...he (Cerinthus) says that after the resurrection the kingdom of Christ will be set up on earth...that there is to be a period of a thousand years for marriage festivals."  
Cerinthus looked forward to just sensual pleasures and Caius opposed this.

- Vol. 13  
p. 26 II
- ✓ b. Origen, A.D. 185-254?, Alexandria. Eusebius relates in his Church History, Book 6, chapter 2, section 9: "And he (Origen) was not satisfied with learning what was simple and obvious in the sacred words, but sought for something more, and even at that age busied himself with deeper speculations."  
Origen wrote in On the Principles, Book 2, Chapter 11, that "Certain persons, then, refusing the labour of thinking and adopting a superficial view of the letter of the law....being disciples of the letter alone,...not following Paul regarding resurrection of a spiritual body. And consequently they say, that after the resurrection there will be marriages, and the begetting of children..." (He didn't understand that there would be both spirit and flesh existing together during the millennium and he, like others, confused the millennium with the New Jerusalem.)

Going on in the same source: "Then, again . . . they think they are to be kings and princes, like those earthly nomads who now exist; chiefly, as it appears, on account of that expression in the Gospel: 'Have thou power over five cities.' . . . such are the views of those who, while believing in Christ, understand the divine scriptures in a sort of Jewish sense, drawing from them nothing worthy of the divine promises."

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Vol. II
- (c) \* Dionysius (the Great), bishop of Alexandria, Hippo, pupil of Origen. From Eusebius' Church History, Book 7, chapter 25: "Some before us have set aside and rejected the book (Revelation) altogether, criticizing it chapter by chapter, and pronouncing it without sense or argument, and maintaining that the title is fraudulent. For they say that it is not the work of John, nor is it a revelation, because it is covered thickly and densely by a veil of obscurity. And they affirm that none of the saints, nor any one in the Church is its author, but that Cerinthus, who founded the sect which was called after him the Cerinthian, desiring reputable authority for his fiction, prefixed the name. For the doctrine which he taught was this: that the kingdom of Christ will be an earthly one."

- p. 253-261  
Vol 2
- d. \* St. Augustine, A.D. 354-430, bishop of Hippo, The City of God, Book 20, chapter 7: "Thus there was supposed to follow upon the 6000 years taken as 6 days a seventh day or Sabbath taking up the last thousand, and to be given over to the resurrecting saints for celebration . . . In fact, I myself at one

time accepted such an opinion. But when these interpreters (Montanists) say that the rising saints are to spend their time in limitless gormandizing with such heaps of food and drink as not only go beyond all sense of decent restraint but go utterly beyond belief, then such an interpretation becomes wholly unacceptable save to the carnal-minded.

"The other interpretation makes the 'thousand years' stand for all the years of the Christian era, a perfect number being used to indicate the 'fulness of time'. For the number one thousand is the cube of 10.  $10 \times 10 = 100$ , which is already a square, but still a plane, figure; to give it depth and make it a cube, 100 is further multiplied by 10 to make a thousand." (100 sometimes stands for 'all') "The reason, therefore, why the Devil is bound and cast into the abyss is to prevent his deceiving the nations that now make up the Church as he used to deceive and possess them before they became the Church. The text does not say that he may not deceive this man or that man, but only 'that he should deceive the nations' (meaning, without doubt, the Church) 'no more until the thousand years should be finished.' The thousand years that make up the '6th day' or the entire course of time this world has still to go."

Chapter 8: "To conclude: the Devil is bound throughout this entire period covered by this Book--from Christ's first coming to His second coming at the end of the world -- but not bound in such a way that this special binding during the period which St. John calls the 'thousand years' implies his powerlessness to deceive the Church. It is clear when one reflects that, even when he is loosed, he will not be enabled to do so. There is the argument! If his chaining means that he has no power or no permission to deceive, then his loosing means that he will have power or permission to deceive. But, of course, such a possibility is unthinkable. No, the binding up of the Devil means this: that he is not allowed to exercise his full powers in tempting or deceiving men by violence or fraud, in driving them or tricking them into his camp by main force, or by lying fallacies. If he were allowed this freedom over such a long period, given the weakness of many men, a number of people, whom God wills to protect from such onslaught, would be affected."

Chapter 9: "During the 'thousand years' when the Devil is bound, the saints also reign for a 'thousand years' and, doubtless, the two periods are identical and mean the span between Christ's first and second coming."

Augustine therefore concludes that the kingdom of 1000 years must be the church on the earth now.

### III Modern Criticism against the Millennial Doctrine

- NO a. Cecil John Cadoux, Vice Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, The Historic Mission of Jesus, Harper and Brothers: (PERTAINING TO END T
- "Jesus' own knowledge was to some extent limited by the conditions of his race and education, that his (eschatological) teaching contains an element of human ignorance and error, that he uttered predictions which were never fulfilled in the sense in which he uttered them, and that he assumed, as true, descriptions of the life after death which, resting ultimately on Jewish imagination, FURTHER INTERPRETATION"

cannot rightly be so regarded." (p. 343) . . . but we cannot in reason profess to believe that he (Jesus) had a truly human nature and (p. 344, that he) increased in wisdom as in stature, and at the same time assume that he had wholly emancipated himself from every existing flaw in the current religious beliefs of his people." (p. 345) "Jesus' apocalyptic teaching (the accuracy of which, in the form given to it in the record, can no longer be defended) . . ." (p. 348)". . . in some measure he shared the ignorance common to the Jews of his day."

COULD IT  
BE ATTACKED?  
IT IS TRUE.

NO

b.

William R. Cannon Dean of the School of Theology, Emory Univ., Georgia, (Methodist), Professor of Church History and Historical Theology. The following are excerpts from a paper read before the Methodist World Council which met prior to the World Council of Churches Assembly in Evanston, Illinois.

Part I: "There is, therefore, little or no affinity, doctrinally or otherwise, between Methodism and those adventists and millenarian sects which have flourished with almost the exotic wildness of the tropics in what normally we think of as the temperate climate of our American religious life.

"The millennium, that traditional period of 1000 years during which Christ will rule the earth in person, is conspicuously absent from the working vocabulary both of historic and contemporary Methodism. . . But more than mere indifference to the calculations and preditions of millenarian adventism, there is inherent in Methodist theology an antipathy to the underlying spirit out of which such curious reckonings and prophecies come. . . The second advent of Christ on earth, the binding of Satan, the 1000 year reign over the just, the unloosing of Satan, the war of saints and sinners, the conquest of evil by Christ, the great assize in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and eternal bliss in heaven for the good and eternal punishment in hell for the wicked -- details variously arranged and in sundry accounts, have never appealed to the Methodists."

ROM. 9:7

NO QUESTION  
AS TO WHAT  
IS THE TRUTH

Part IV: "Consequently, the primary principle in our concept is that the eschaton is an "individual experience." It comes to each of us in the moment of death, . . . "Christ's second coming to us takes place when we die and are translated from mundane to spiritual creatures; at that time we stand under the full scrutiny of his justice and he decides in mercy the nature of our immortal state. . . . We live, not in anticipation of a coming kingdom that will be imposed upon us by God, but rather here and now within the Kingdom, so that what ultimately will be cannot be greatly different from what already is when we love God with all our hearts and our neighbours--as ourselves."

HUMAN NATURE  
IMPOSED ON  
US BY GOD