

**“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”  
(Rev 22:12)**

### ✠ Lecture III: The Millennial Reign ✠

The 1,000-year reign of Lord Jesus Christ (Chiliasm – Gr. *chilioi* – meaning ‘thousand’) is mentioned in chapter twenty of the Holy Book of Revelation:

“Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations ...” (Rev 20:4-8)

→ Some Protestant sects interpret the above verses literally and teach that there will be an **earthly** kingdom for Lord Jesus Christ and that the believer will reign with Him for one thousand years. These years, according to them, will be a time of unprecedented peace, of rampant prosperity, of great purity, of perpetual health (the extraordinary lifespan that characterized the race before the flood will reappear), and of joy. This idea is chiefly derived from Jewish eschatological expectations of an earthly kingdom. It is noteworthy to mention that St. Augustine was a millenarian in his early life, but later changed his views.

Those who believe in a literal millennial reign are divided among themselves into two groups:

2. The pre-millennialists who believe that Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth physically before the start of the 1,000-year period.
3. The post-millennialists who believe that Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth physically after the end of the 1,000-year period.

→ The Orthodox Church does not believe in a literal interpretation of the above verses and in fact considers the idea of a literal kingdom a false teaching for the following reasons:

✠ The 1,000-year reign is a symbolic and spiritual period that started from the day of Lord Jesus’ crucifixion and will continue until His Second Coming for judgment:

- Our Lord said, “**Now** the ruler of this world **will be cast out**. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” (Jn 12:31,32)
- “I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and **bound him for a thousand years**; and **he cast him** into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.” (Rev 20:1-3)

✠ Our Lord said, “**NOW**” Satan will be bound when He was talking about His crucifixion. Thus the thousand years reign of Lord Jesus Christ has started when, by His redemption of humanity through His blood. He bound and restrained the power of Satan over mankind as St. Paul said, “Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. **Having disarmed principalities and powers**, He made a public spectacle of them, **triumphing over them in it** [the cross]” (Col 2:14,15).

✠ The number 1,000 is a mystical number that is understood to symbolically mean an indeterminate number of years, “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet 3:8) – “For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past.” (Ps 90:4)

✚ St. John states that those who enjoy the 1,000-year reign of Lord Jesus Christ have participated in the “first resurrection” (**Rev 20:5**) – as we have explained in Lecture I, the first resurrection is a spiritual one from the death of sin. Thus those who repent and believe are considered to have joined the spiritual reign of Lord Jesus Christ– “Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall ... reign with Him a thousand years.” (**Rev 20:6**) – Notice that this reign is not earthly for it extends beyond the life on earth, “I saw the **souls** [not bodies] of those who had been beheaded ...they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.” (**Rev 20:4**)

✚ The Holy Book of Revelation contains many mystical, symbolic, and allegorical expressions that cannot be interpreted literally but carry exalted and spiritual meanings often completely different from that readily apparent.

✚ Those who teach that Lord Jesus is coming to reign on earth for one thousand years and then will come again for judgment are in fact teaching that there are three comings for the Lord; the first in His Incarnation, the second for the earthly kingdom, and the third for Judgment – This is totally absurd.

✚ The Second and final Coming of Lord Jesus Christ will be for Judgment (**Mt 24; 25; Jn 5:28,29**).

✚ Holy Scripture points in the direction of a spiritual kingdom rather than an earthly one. Our Lord never spoke of an earthly kingdom for Himself. In fact, He spoke against such a kingdom, He said it clearly, “My kingdom is not of this world” (**Jn 18:36**) – also, “when Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed...” (**Jn 15:6**) – again, “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (**Rom 14:17**)

✚ Moreover, our Lord said, “Indeed the Kingdom of God is within you.” (**Lk 17:21**) – this is a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly one for the Lord said afterwards, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, **and you will not see it.**” (**Lk 17:22**) This clearly contradicts any notion of an earthly kingdom.

✚ This spiritual kingdom does not have a time limit of 1,000 years or any number of years:

- “Of His kingdom there will be no end.” (**Lk 133**)
- “To Him was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one that which shall not be destroyed.” (**Dan 7:14**)
- “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” (**Ps 45:6; Heb 1:8**)

✚ Believers in the literal millennial reign speak of earthly rewards and earthly joy. However, Lord Jesus Christ said, “great is your reward **in heaven**” (**Mt 5:12**) – St. John also said, “Do not love the world or the things in the world ... the world is passing away, and the lust of it” (**1 Jn 2:15-17**) – It was written, “Here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come.” (**Heb 13:14**) – Thus St. Paul said, “our citizenship is in heaven” (**Phil 3:20**) – “I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.” (**Phil 1:23,24**) If an earthly kingdom was to be expected St. Paul would have said, “I can’t wait until the Lord comes to reign over His people here on earth” but on the contrary we see him wanting to depart from this vain world.

✚ The post-millennialists who teach that Lord Jesus is coming after the end of the 1,000-year period contradict the straightforward biblical teaching of the element of surprise associated with the Last Day. Moreover, this teaching is not consistent with the words of our Lord in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, “Let both [good & evil] grow together until the harvest ...” (**Mt 13:24-30**) since they claim that during these 1,000 years there will be no evil on earth.

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\* This lecture is adapted from ‘*Comparative Theology*’ by H.H. Pope Shenouda III.