**BIBLE QUESTIONS: SESSION 35**

**Questions: *Will there be a millennial rule on earth by Christ? Define amillennialism, premillennialism, and post – millennialism.*  *What about the great tribulation? Dispensationalism?***

1. **“Will there be a millennial rule on earth by Christ”?**
   1. Yes, there is *presently* a millennial rule on earth by Christ *right now*.
      1. Think of how the church rose up from a small persecuted group of Jews to the way of life that conquered the Roman Empire and established western civilization as we know it! And though not all governments arose out of Christianity, the ones that did are the ones that still have (unofficial) dominion over them. The Holy Roman Empire, and now, the US which is superpower.
         1. This does not mean that the government submission to Christianity was always faithful, or truly Christian. It does mean that Christianity conquered it.
         2. It also does not mean that Christians must get behind everything the US or any other originally Christian nation does, nor does it mean that the US needs to move towards theocracy. On the contrary, a movement towards theocracy seems to be the plan of the antichrist/man of lawlessness.
      2. At the end of the millennium there will be a period of intense tribulation before the coming of christ. Apparently, the true church will lose its influence over the government (2 Thess). We are already seeing little social or political benefit to being a Christian today.
   2. The millennial rule on earth by Christ is the establishment of the His Church on Earth.
      1. This is called the “kingdom of Grace”, whereby Christ rules in the heart of believers by faith, and they are presently “more than conquerors.”
      2. Jesus says, “Repent for *the kingdom of God* is at hand.” and “But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they *see the kingdom of God*.”
         1. The “kingdom of God” that is at hand at the time of the disciples, and that they will not taste death until they see it is “the kingdom of grace”, that is the establishment of the one holy Christian and apostolic church. The millennial kingdom of Christ on earth *is* the church.
      3. Jesus says, [**20**](http://biblehub.com/luke/17-20.htm)Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, [**21**](http://biblehub.com/luke/17-21.htm)nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”[***h***](https://biblehub.com/esv/luke/17.htm#footnotes) (Luke 17:20-21)
2. **Define amillennialism, premillennialism, and post-millennialism.**
   1. Amillennialism (the name is not self-chosen) is the orthodox teaching that the thousand year reign of Christ on earth is not a literal, but symbolic 1000 years that began with the ascension of Christ and the establishment of the church and will end with the second coming and final judgement, both on the last day..
   2. Premillennialism is the heterodox/false teaching that a literal 1000 years of blessed will begin with the second coming of Christ and end with the final judgment. This teaching is often coupled with a pre-tribulation “rapture” of the church.
   3. Post-Millennialism is the heterodox/false teaching that Christ will come after a 1000 years of prosperity on earth. Some prefer the term “optimillenialists” because they are optimistic in that Christianity will grow and many will convert to Christ in the millennium.
3. **What about the Great Tribulation?**
   1. Scripture speaks about the great tribulation. Revelation 7 seems to speak of the entire history of the church as being in tribulation. Matthew 24, Jesus speaks of a tribulation that will intensify right before his coming. Revelation 20 speaks of a period of time before the end that satan will be loosed. 2 Thesallonians speaks of the great apostasy and the coming of antichrist that will precede the end.
   2. These events are prophetic and biblical, so it would be wrong for a Christian church to ignore them or dismiss them. However, the idea that the church is supposed to identify them is a point of contention.
   3. The bible seems to treat them as it treats the issue of election. They are to be taught for the comfort, assurance, and strengthening of the saints to endure.
      1. It is never the case that “we are in the great tribulation”, only that if we are, if the saints are suffering…we can know that it is birth pangs before the end, and that this is expected as Jesus told us before hand.
      2. Tribulation, Antichrist, apostasy, etc. should never be preached in a way that suggests timetables
         1. “No one knows the day or the hour**”**
         2. If you knew the night the master would come, you would stay awake. You don’t know, so stay awake always.
   4. or secret prophetic knowledge by reading the bible as codes for Christians to decipher.
      1. It is schismatic and anti-catholic, even gnostic to decipher hidden plans of God in the bible. All is clear and in the open.
4. **What is Dispensationalism**
   1. Dispensational Theology teaches that there will be one or more dispensations or different stages, preceded by signs to be recognized by the elect, that signify progressively different administrative principles God will be acting towards mankind and his church.
      1. Premillennialism is the most clearly dispensational because it teaches that the second coming of jesus will usher in a different dispensation or stage called the millennium. Pre-tribulational premillennialism teaches that there will be a rapture preceeding the stage of tribulation which will endure until Jesus’ second coming to usher in the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth with his church before the last day and final judgment.
      2. To my understanding, postmillennialism and amillenialism are not dispensational because, though there may be different “stages”, those stages are ambiguous, even to the elect so that “no one knows the day or the hour”.
         1. The Lutheran Confessions note that the Papacy fulfills the criteria of AntiChrist or “the man of lawlessness” as per 2 Thessalonians. We have had signs of tribulation since the beginning of the church.
         2. As far as I know, post millennialism doesn’t have a way to demarcate the 1000 years of prosperity, as the second coming is after, and there is no distinguisheable tribulation.
   2. Orthodox Lutherans are not dispensational because
      1. The signs of the end are nondisconfimrable, and hidden even to the elect.
         1. “No one knows the day or the hour”
      2. Just as the New Testament was “hidden” in the Old Testement; so too the Parousia of Christ is “hidden” in the New Testament. This is not hidden in the sense that it is up to sinful man to figure it all out beforehand; but it is something that will need to be revealed to sinful man, but until then remains only as shadows and hints of what’s to come.
         1. “Now we see dimly as in a mirror; then we will see face to face” (1 Cor 13)