

**Revelation 6: 1; "The Four Views of Revelation- Part 2- Amillennialism",
Sermon # 44 in the series - "The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by
Pastor Paul Rendall on January 14th, 2007,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Last Sunday I began to give you my overview of the 4 major views of the book of Revelation. These are my own observations on the 4 views, and my object in relating them is to show you, that in all fairness, godly men have differed widely on the meaning of the symbols and pictures in the book of Revelation. It is not, as some have suggested, an easy study. And I want to try to do justice to my description of each of these 4 views, bringing out those truths or principles that each system of interpretation holds, which would be of benefit to our understanding, and also to bring out what I believe may be deficiencies in each system. Some people want to be what they call pan-millennial in their understanding of prophecy. "It will all pan out in the end," they say. Although this is funny, and we all laugh at it, it seems to me that most people, although they desperately want to be right in regard to this subject, they do not want to take the time required to really, personally read the book of Revelation and think about its meaning. But the book itself says, "Blessed are those who read and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near." There is a need for us to keep those things which are written in it, in our hearts. It is a book for all generations of the church, not just the first, or the last generations. It is for all of us. And so, as I begin my overview, I want to begin with the Amillennial view, for it has the most broad and all-encompassing interpretation of the principles of prophecy. I am going to be quoting extensively from William Hendriksen's book More than Conquerors as my main reference tool to convey what this system teaches on the book of Revelation. I think that his book is probably the best representation of this system's view, although there are other men who do the subject justice as well. I simply haven't had the time to read all the authors on the subject. But let us put forward this afternoon several prominent truths of Amillennialism on this book of Revelation.

1st- To Amillennialists the theme of this book is the Victory of Christ and of his Church over the Dragon (Satan) and his angels.

This is certainly to be acknowledged and gloried in by all of Christ's saints, not just those who are Amillennial. Mr. Hendriksen says, "Throughout the prophecies of this book the Christ is ever pictured as the Victor, the conqueror." (1: 18, 2: 8; 5: 9ff, 6: 2, 11: 15, 12: 9ff, 14: 1, 15: 2ff, 19: 16, 20: 4, 22: 3) "He conquers death, Hades, the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the men who worship the beast, etc." "He is victorious; hence, so are we!" "Even when we seem to be hopelessly defeated." "Do you see that band of believers?" "Are their garments splashed and filthy?" "They wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." (7: 14 and 22: 14) "Are they "in great tribulation?" "They come out of it." "Are they killed?" "They stand upon their feet." "Are they persecuted by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet?" "In the end you see them standing victoriously on Mount Zion." "Does it seem that their prayers are not heard?" (Chapter 6, verse 10) "The judgments sent upon the earth are God's answer to their prayers." (Chapter 8, verses 3-5) "Why these very prayers constitute the real key that will unlock the mysteries of any sound philosophy of history." "Do they seem to be

defeated?" "In reality they reign!" "Yes they reign upon the earth, (Chapter 5, verse 10), in heaven with Christ a thousand years, (Ch. 20, verse 4); in the new heaven and earth forever and ever. (Ch. 22: 5) I hope that you will agree with the truth that Mr. Hendriksen is putting forward here. Because Christ is victorious over sin and death, so also will all of his saints be. Think of Roman 8: 35. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'" "Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." This is the victory of Jesus Christ which is portrayed in the book of Revelation.

2ndly- Many modern Amillennialists believe that this book consists of seven sections and each section runs parallel to the others.

These seven sections Mr. Hendriksen says, each embody a theme that can be easily distinguished from the others. They are **1st-** Christ in the midst of the Seven Golden Lampstands, Chapters 1-3. **2nd-** The book with the Seven Seals, Chapter 4-7. **3rd-** The Seven Trumpets of Judgment, Chapters 8-11. **4th-** The Woman and the Man-Child persecuted by the Dragon and his helpers (The Beast and the Harlot), Chapters 12-14. **5th-** The Seven Bowls of Wrath, Chapters 15 and 16. **6th-** The Fall of the Great Harlot and of the Beasts, Chapters 17-19. And **7th-** The Judgment upon the Dragon (Satan) followed by the New Heavens and the New Earth. "Each of these sections run parallel and each section spans the entire new dispensation, from the first to the second coming of Christ. Further, many Amillennial commentators believe that these seven sections fall into 2 groups. Chapter 12, verse 1, seems to be the point where the first group or series of visions ends and the second begins. In the first group, chapters 1-11, we see the struggle among men, that is, between believers and unbelievers. The world attacks the church. The church is avenged, protected, and victorious. In the second group of visions, chapters 12-22 we are shown that this struggle on earth has a deeper background. It is the outward manifestation of the devil's attack upon the Man-Child. The Dragon attacks Christ. Repulsed, he directs all his fury against the church. As his helpers he employs the two beasts and the great harlot. All these enemies of the church are defeated in the end." Such is a good representative division of the book of Revelation from the Amillennial perspective.

3rdly- Amillennialists believe that the seals, the trumpets, the bowls, and similar pictures, refer not to specific events or details of history, but to principles that are operating throughout the history of the world.

These picture symbols, they believe, do not refer each to a specific historical event, but rather a whole series of happenings from the beginning to the end of the dispensation. "Thus, for example," says Mr. Hendriksen, "we can understand the expression 'a huge mountain all ablaze' that was 'hurled into the sea' if it represents all maritime disasters throughout the dispensation." "Again, these symbols affect not just one, very limited group of people but a multitude that cannot be counted." "The trumpets, for example, affect mankind." "They do not refer merely to some people living in Europe who happen to have a quarrel with the pope." "Reading Revelation 9: 20: "And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues..." -- "The description is even more general than this, for these symbols seem to affect not only all the unregenerate in one age, but also former generations." "Notice, 16: 6: ".....For they poured out the blood of saints and prophets." "We cannot escape the impression

therefore, that the symbols refer to series of happenings, to principles of human and satanic conduct and of divine moral government." "They refer to things that happen again and again and again, so that the book of Revelation is always up-to-date." "The symbols describe principles of conduct and of divine moral government that are in evidence today, as well as during the first century." This is very characteristic of Amillennial thought.

4thly- Amillennialists believe that Satan is a defeated enemy and is presently bound in accordance with Revelation 20, verse 2.

Turn over there with me. In verse 1 it says, "Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and 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." Mr. Hendriksen says, "Now, in order to arrive at the real meaning of "the binding of Satan we must first ask the question: just what meaning or value did this passage have for the persecuted Christians of John's day?" "What a picture of spiritual darkness and desolation it was in that day!" "Try to count the many idols that disgrace the streets and sanctuaries of imperial Rome." "The abominations, the filth and corruption, attendant upon the celebration of pagan festivals, the superstitions, vices, etc., are truly staggering." "Temples and shrines throughout the world are crowded with ignorant, half-despairing worshippers." "We see a few scattered churches established through the efforts of Paul and others." "For the rest, heathendom is triumphant.--Now, move back the hand of history to that long period which preceded Christ's ascension." "Notice" all the nations--with the exception of the Jews--are under the thralldom of Satan!" "Not, of course, in the absolute sense of the term, for God always reigns supreme, but in the sense of Acts 14: 16: 'God ...who in the past generations suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways.'" "If during this present N.T. era the devil 'blinds the minds of unbelievers,' that was true even more emphatically during the old dispensation." "With a sigh of horror we exclaim, 'Is this condition never going to change?' "Will this Old Testament era continue forever?" "Will the devil maintain his rule over the peoples of the earth?" "Will the light of the glorious gospel never penetrate into the palaces and hovels of Asia and Europe?" "Will this intense moral and spiritual darkness continue forever?" "Has God in anger forgotten mercy?" "The answer is, 'Rejoice!'" "Only listen: 'I will tell of the decree: Jehovah said to me.'" "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." "Ask of me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. 2: 8) Again, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust." "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute: The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him....His name shall endure forever." "His name shall be continued as long as the sun: And men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed."

" That was the prophecy." "The spiritual darkness that covers the nations shall not continue: Satan shall deceive the nations no more." "And now the fulfillment. Jesus is born." "He begins his ministry." "The Pharisees accuse him of casting out demons by the power of Satan himself." He answers, "How can one enter into the house of the

strong one--namely Satan--and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong one?" "Then he shall plunder his goods." "Please notice that exactly the same word binding is used here in Matthew as in Revelation 20." "This work of binding the devil was begun when our Lord triumphed over him in the temptations in the wilderness, Matthew 4: 1-11." "As a result, Christ begins to 'cast out' demons." The power and influence of Satan over the deluded masses was beginning to be curtailed." "Again, when the seventy missionaries returned, they said: 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in thy name.'" "Observe what follows: 'And he said to them, I beheld Satan falling as lightning from heaven,' Luke 10: 17, 18." "Here the devil's falling from heaven is associated with the missionary activity of the seventy." "A very significant passage which will do much to explain Revelation 20!" Colossians 2: 15 very definitely associates the despoiling of Satan and his armies with Christ's triumph on the cross." "Revelation 12: 5 clearly shows that the casting out of Satan was a result of Christ's coronation." "Observe, therefore, that in all these passages the binding and casting out or falling of Satan is in some way associated with the first coming of Christ." "Before the coming of Christ--his victory over the devil in the temptations, his ministry, his death, ascension, coronation--salvation had been largely limited to the Jews." "God had suffered Satan to blind the eyes of the nations, so that these nations walked in their own ways." "A great change was to take place." "The truth of the Gospel would gradually replace the "lie" of the devil." "Satan is bound so that that he can deceive the nations no more." "Christ will draw "all men" to himself." "Elect from every nation will be saved."

"Hence in close harmony with all these Scriptural passages--and our exegesis must always be based upon the analogy of Scripture!--we conclude that also here in Revelation 20: 1-3 the binding of Satan and the fact that he is hurled into the abyss to remain there for a thousand years indicates that throughout this present Gospel Age which begins with Christ's first coming and extends nearly to the second coming, the devil's influence on earth is curtailed so that he is unable to prevent the extension of the church among the nations by means of an active missionary program." "During this entire period he is prevented from causing the nations--the world in general--to destroy the church as a mighty, missionary institution." "By means of the preaching of the Word as applied by the Holy Spirit, the elect, from all parts of the world, are brought from darkness to light." "In that sense the church conquers the nations, and the nations do not conquer the church."

This is Amillennialism and it does indeed have an optimistic side to it as Mr. Hendriksen has shown us. I personally believe that we should receive these truths on the relation of the binding of Satan in his activity during the whole church age, to his being bound by our Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry and His death on the cross. It is indeed the basis of all the success of the gospel during all of the church age, even if I cannot believe that we are presently in the Millennium of Revelation 20. I will give you my reasons for this, next week. Next week we shall look more closely at the Amillennial view of the Millennium and the Binding of Satan and see the Amillennial view of the Saints reigning from Revelation 20.