

The Seven Millennium Theory

Otis Q. Sellers
(1901-1992)

In the quarter century that preceded the year 1000 A.D. the minds of many were dominated by the idea that the year 1000 would mark “the end of the world.” There were no sound reasons for this belief. Its only support was that “1000” was a nice round number, and that it would be appropriate for God to end the world at that time. This view spread like a prairie fire. It was even accepted by the ungodly, resulting in a wave of immorality almost without parallel. Men determined to have their final fling before the holocaust descended; but the year 1000 came and went, and nothing out of the ordinary happened.

Since that time, in the religious world, date setting has been the favorite occupation of many. These attempts to “fix the time” have as a rule been related to something called “the battle of Armageddon,” the second coming of Christ, and the beginning of the millennium. Men have set their dates, supported them by elaborate charts, and shouted them from the housetops. In the past two centuries thousands of men have set as many positive dates for the return of the Lord, but when the date arrived, nothing happened. Thus, on the basis of experience alone, a teacher of God’s Word should not be limited when he emphatically denies relationship to any other teacher who attempts to set a date for the end of the dispensation of grace, or for the second advent of Christ, or for the beginning of the millennium. I, for one, cannot extend sympathy to any man who claims to have knowledge of the times and seasons which is greater than that which the Lord Jesus gave to His twelve apostles (Acts 1:7).

In 1953 I wrote a study on this same subject repudiating the ideas of certain who were setting the year 2000 A.D. as being the date for the beginning of that glorious millennium of human history when Satan will be bound and Jesus Christ will be personally present upon the earth. Their theories were not new to me. I had first come upon them in 1923 and as a young student was momentarily intrigued by them. Yet after careful study I rejected them, feeling they were founded solely upon inferences and not upon any direct teaching in the Word of God. They were linking an erroneous human calendar with the errorless Word of God.

These theories hold that God’s complete program for the human race, so far as it is revealed, is to be worked out in seven millenniums; that is, in seven one-thousand-year periods. It is

held that from the creation of Adam to the beginning of the new heaven and new earth is to be exactly seven thousand years, and that the last of these would be the thousand years that follow the return of Jesus Christ. Since, according to the commonly accepted chronology, as established by Archbishop Ussher, nearly 6,000 years have now passed since the creation of Adam, this leaves little time until the first day of the seventh millennium begins. Since these men readily admit that there is a seven year period, the seventieth week of Israel's seventy weeks, this now leaves just little time before the covenant is made that marks the beginning of that seven-year period, and for the complete setting of the stage for the acting out of the great drama of that seventieth week. Israel must be restored, the temple of God must be rebuilt on its ancient site where a Mohammedan mosque stands today. So, all this means that an enormous amount now has to be accomplished soon. Could it be that the "temple of God" which the man of sin desecrates (Matthew 24:15; II Thessalonians 2:4) is jerry-built?

At the time I wrote on this subject in 1953, some of the brethren who were advocating this theory were then allowing 33 years for the setting of the stage, and others were allowing only 16, but both of these groups have now run out of years and their charts and schedules now mock them.

The major argument that was then and still is being presented for the beginning of the seventh millennium in 2000 A.D. is taken from II Peter 3:8. Here we read:

"But beloved, he not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the LORD as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

There are some who see in this passage a mathematical formula, some sort of a code-breaker for determining when an event will take place. They think that God is here establishing fixed values. Then they go to the first two chapters of Genesis where they find God actively working for six days and resting on the seventh, and "presto," this gives them the theory that God's program for man covers seven days or seven thousand years; and since the seventh day was the Sabbath, it follows in their reasoning that the seventh one thousand year period has to be the millennium. Now the flood-gates of imagination are opened and out flows outrageous and anti-biblical results.

I am not able to put my eye to the keyhole of a simple passage such as II Peter 3:8 and see the far-reaching propositions that these men claim they see. Furthermore, I know that what they are presenting is not taught in this passage, even when it is combined with the opening chapters of Genesis. I have studied and expounded many times the chapter in which this passage appears, and in it have found many truths such as:

- 1) A divine promise is as certain of fulfillment in a thousand years as it is in one day. A human promise always becomes weaker the longer it remains unfulfilled.
- 2) Time with God has none of the limitations that it has with us. With us a day is a day and a thousand years is exactly that.

- 3) A long time with God may be a very short time with us, and a short time in God's sight may be a very long one in ours.
- 4) God can either execute in a day or spread out over a thousand years any purpose of His mind or action of His hand.
- 5) In Psalm 90:4 we are told that a thousand years in God's sight are but as yesterday when it is past, even as a watch in the night. A "watch in the night" among the Hebrews would have been four hours. Therefore, a thousand years can be either twenty-four hours or four hours. Thus, the Spirit of God has set up a safeguard so that none would think He was establishing fixed values.

The proponents of the seventh millennium theory also hold that the seven days of Genesis 1 and 2 are typical of the seven millennia of earth's history, six of which have already about run their course, and that the creation week has a prophetic character. Yet if each day is examined as to its character, and the six one thousand year periods of human history are examined, it will be found that there is no correspondence in any of them. This is especially true of the seventh day when it is compared to the prophesied character of the personal presence of Jesus Christ for a thousand years – the time usually called the millennium.

On the seventh day God ended His work and rested (Genesis 2:1). This we are told is a foreview of the millennium. but when the facts are faced there is no correspondence, likeness, or identity of character between these two. Whatever the character of the millennium will be, it is not in any sense a Sabbath. This thousand-year period is inaugurated by the second coming of Jesus Christ. This coming will result in His *parousia* or personal presence for a thousand years ... His coming will not be in order to rest but to begin a glorious new work. This event does not end God's work; it will mark the beginning of what is probably the greatest period of divine effort. In these thousand years, Christ will work. It will not be a Sabbath for God, and it will not be a Sabbath for man ... The millennium has no correspondence with the seventh creation day when God rested.

Space does not permit the examination of other passages which are called into the witness box to give testimony in support of this theory. Nevertheless, when these passages are carefully examined, it becomes plain that they have been misinterpreted and do not support the theory being advocated. One of these is Hosea 6:1-2 where the people of Israel say:

"Come and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us: He hath smitten and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight."

The "one day equals a thousand years" equation is applied to this passage, and in order to make it come out right these "two days" or two thousand years are started with the birth of Christ. However, it is my conviction that these two days are two twenty-four hour periods that begin with God's assumption of sovereignty and Jesus Christ is unveiled. Israel will then know the One whom they have so long

rejected, and this will begin two days of mourning and depression as they wait to discover what will happen to them. It is not until the third day of divine rule that they are revived and begin to live in His sight.

Seed & Bread
Issue #92 – 1978

Taken from the *Bible Student's Notebook*[™], a weekly Bible study publication available in two formats (electronic and printed).

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Study Shelf, PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963
1-800-784-6010 / www.StudyShelf.com

B I B L E S T U D E N T ' S P R E S S [™]
W i n d b e r , P e n n s y l v a n i a

