

It is evident that what is described in Isaiah 11 and related passages is an earthly kingdom. How silly it would be to say that this is a picture of heaven, or of some condition after death.

The wonderful time of peace described in chapter 11 and in other Old Testament passages has come to be called the millennium. This term is derived from the Latin for "thousand years," and is drawn from the fact that six times in Revelation 20:1-6 the term "thousand years" is used in relation to a period when Satan will be bound, in order that "he should deceive the nations no more."

There are three views as to the time of this millennium. One, which is called premillennialism, holds that these passages describe a situation that will occur after Jesus returns to this earth and destroys the forces of wickedness. A second interpretation, known as postmillennialism, considers that they describe a situation that will be brought about by the preaching of the Gospel prior to the Lord's return to the earth, and that at the end of it He will simply return to direct the last judgment and bring the affairs of this world to a final end. In recent years a new view has been presented called amillennialism, which holds that there is not to be any actual period of universal peace and happiness upon this earth, but that all these passages must be so interpreted as to describe heaven or the intermediate state, or the situation of the church during the present age. All such interpretations of these and other similar passages require one to take so much figuratively as actually to rob them of any real significance.

Occasionally one hears the statement that there is nothing to connect these wonderful Old Testament predictions with the statements in Revelation 20:1-6 about a millennium. When I first heard this objection I wondered whether God had really tied the passages together in such a way as to show that they are closely related. Then I noticed something that made me marvel at the way that God prepares in advance for every important problem.