ments, while Micronesia and Polynesia accounted for forty or so instances, and Australia only three (Burridge: 32–36). Although the theoretical frames Burridge employs to encompass the many permutations of millenarian movements are now somewhat dated, his insight that beneath all millenarian movements is a quest for “moral regeneration” – that is, a return to the past as a means of facing an uncertain future – remains penetrating:

Faced with relations which the traditional categories of understanding can no longer render intelligible, fresh categories are sought. Faced with experiences and kinds of behavior which the traditional categories can no longer predict, whose ordering the traditional categories and assumptions can no longer guarantee, heart and mind plunge into the past to seek inspiration which will carry them forward into a new synthesis. (Burridge: 142)

There is no shortage of studies of millenarianism in cultures where Abrahamic traditions are not dominant. These studies tend to show diverse scholarly motives; whereas interest in the South Pacific tends to be broadly anthropological (Burridge), or, more recently, as a key element of colonial studies (Kaplan), studies of millenarianism in East Asia tend to focus on the religio-political context reflecting the complex mix of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Christianity in these cultures (Flaherty; Ownby; Rhee; Spence; Yi). To some degree, the abiding scholarly interest in millenarianism may be attributed to the near constant presence of millennial movements in the West, forming a fundamental point of comparison in the study of this religious phenomenon.


Herman Tull

See also → Millennium, Millennialism

Millennium, Millennialism

I. Introduction

“Millennialism” (also “Chiliasm”) denotes a belief and anticipation of an imminent and literal thousand-year reign by Jesus that will usher in peace, prosperity, and the glorification of God (the “Millennium”) before the Final Judgment. The controlling passage for millennialism is Rev 20:1–6, which describes John’s vision of the “priests of God and of Christ” who “shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev 20:6, RSV). Zoroastrianism may be construed as millennial, although the span of universal history extends to 12,000 years in total. The final 3,000-year period following Zoroaster’s birth, however, in which evil will be defeated, has three 1,000-year subdivisions, during which outbreaks of evil are expected, but curtailed by three successive virgin-born saviours. Zoroastianism is believed to have influenced post-exilic Jewish and Christian eschatology.

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II. New Testament

Revelation 20:1–6 depicts an angel descending from heaven, overpowering Satan, holding him captive for a thousand years (Rev 20:2) and taking away his power over the inhabitants of the earth. At the same time, the souls of those beheaded for their belief are resurrected (Rev 20:4) and reign together with Christ as kings and priests (Rev 20:6), while the rest of the dead do not partake of this kingdom (Rev 20:5). The text leaves open, however, where that kingdom is to be established and who is expected to be ruled by Christ and his own. The lacunae have stimulated later interpreters to insert further aspects from various other Biblical texts and to create a fuller image of the Millenium or Golden Age.

Jewish eschatological and apocalyptic texts contain comparable traditions. On the basis of the idea of the world-week (Ps 90:4; Barn. 15), 2 En. 33 describes a 1,000-year break between this and the coming aeon, while 4 Ezra 7:26–33 reports a 400-year state of joy that the Messiah will prepare for the saved. At the end of this period, the Messiah and his entourage die, and the world returns to a seven-day primeval silence before the new aeon begins. In the Testament of Isaac, the pious have the privilege of taking part in a millennial feast (T. Isaac 8:11, 20; 10:10). In Revelation 19–22, the scenes do not make up a coherent sequence of events. Rather, they are a patchwork of different images, a limited kingdom of the Messiah, and the eternal reign of God, now combined according to biblical patterns.
(Ezek 36–48). Therefore, the sequence cannot be read as a schedule for a certain time in history or a last period. The 1,000-year kingdom in Revelations is not a historical event that promises special wages for the pious, but can be read as an expression of the eschatological state of salvation that John describes through a variety of images.

Revelation 20:1–6 doubtless influenced early Christian chiliastic ideas about a 1,000-year kingdom within history like it is witnessed by Justin, Irenaeus and Tertullian, but Clement of Alexandria and Origen favored a spiritual interpretation of Rev 20:1–6. Augustine believed that Rev 20:1–6 described the present time of the church. In medieval theology and during the Reformation, chiliastic interpretations of Rev 20:1–6 found renewed favor, such as in the works of Joachim von Fiore and Thomas Müntzer (see below “III. Christianity A. Medieval Christianity”).


III. Christianity

A. Medieval Christianity

The book of Revelation offered early Christians a dazzling array of cataclysmic apocalyptic imagery and symbolism drawn from key biblical texts (i.e., Ezekiel, Daniel), embedded in a framework of numerical patterns. The endless exegeses of the book’s symbols and images have, even more than those of Daniel, contributed to the Western apocalyptic imagination in all its forms: representational art, chronology, historiography, literature, and new prophecy, among others (Emmerson/McGinn). Primarily an apocalyptic reading of the present, the text offered generation after generation of “road maps” to the immediate future, how to “read the signs of the (present) time” as the time of universal salvation. When such readings failed (as they all have thus far), the book provided disappointed audiences in their acute cognitively dissonant with a dramaturgical prophetic salvational: a “partial experience in the present of the anticipated future bliss,” a performance with the power to bind a community in the anticipation of the wondrous events promised therein (Gager). Politically, the text’s scarcely concealed hostility to empire (Babylon/Rome) made it “the most strident anti-imperial text in surviving early Christian literature, and perhaps the most striking piece of extant resistance literature from the first-century Mediterranean world” (Friesen: 172).

For the apologist theologians, the book of Revelation was a serious problem. Groups like the Monophysites (mid-2nd century), inspired by Revelation’s promise, anticipated the New Jerusalem’s descent on Papuza in Phrygia destabilizing both political and religious hierarchies. Indeed, some of the earliest Christian biblical scholarship developed to undermine Revelation’s authority by dissociating the author John the Seer from John the Evangelist (Dionysus of Alexandria ca. 260). Eusebius, who presided over the marriage of Christianity and imperialism (“One God, one emperor”), did not like the book, but may have included it in Constantine’s Bible because the emperor valued its imagery for his own self-image (Odahl).

Christian chronography tried to domesticate Revelation’s millennium by arguing that it would only come in the year 6000 annus mundi (2 Pet 3:8; Barn., 15:4a–5a). By decoupling millennium (earthly collective salvation) from apocalyptic imminence, ecclesiastical figures could affirm the former, popular promise, while urging patience and acceptance of current conditions. After a wave of apocalyptic expectation around 200, Hippolytus linked this meta-historical scheme to a biblical chronology that placed Jesus’ birth in 5500 AM, and the advent of the sabbatical millennium some 300 years later (500 CE). Christian chronographers, over the course of the next millennium, targeted two years “6000” (500 and 801 CE), and two years “1000” (1000 and 1033 CE) (Landes 1988; 2000).

Augustine and Jerome, both working at the turn of the 6th (ca. 400 CE) found themselves struggling with apocalyptic panics (398/400, Sack of Rome, 410/5910). They tried to domesticate Revelation by arguing that the millennium had already begun (with Christ’s resurrection, fulfilling the prophecies of Daniel), and/or existed in the heavenly city (Markus). By the late empire, millennialism had become a dirty word closely associated with carnal Jews, part of an extensive supersessionist discourse (Kinzig). So successful were Augustine and Jerome in driving millennialism from orthodox Christian theology, that for a long time historians maintained that millennialism disappeared in the West as well, at least until the late 12th century and the work of Joachim of Fiore (a view still held by some today).

However, the evidence of the chronological shifts in the Latin West suggest that, unlike in the East where the initial chronologies prevailed, Western theologians wanted to avoid the explicit advent of a year that promised the millennium. Indeed, the Early Middle Ages (500–1000) had a great deal more apocalyptic and millennial thought than once imagined (Palmer; Gabrielle/Palmer). The “millennial coronation” of Charlemagne on the first day of the year 6000 (Christmas Day 801), imported an originally Greek imperial millennialism about a “Last Emperor” (Pseudo-Methodius, Palmer; Landes 1988) and started a long and fecund tradition of Last Emperors
Millennium, Millennialism

and resurrected should-have-been Last Emperors (“imperator redivivus”) in the West, which included not only genuine emperors like Frederick I and II, but pretenders like the Pseudo-Baldwin (Cohn: ch. 4–5; Givens). Again in the 6th century (this time AM II), a new chronology (Bede’s Anno Domini) provided one last “millennial” delay – this time, ironically, to an Augustinian date, 1000 AD and Anno Passiones (Landes 2003). In this “millennial generation,” we find major shifts in Christian religiosity, including the first popular heresies and the first European, popular millennial movement that received ecclesiastical approval, the Peace of God (Landes 2017).

From the turn of the millennium on, millennial discourse repeatedly drew inspiration from Revelation (Emmerson/McGinn), including that of church reformers (Whalen) and Crusaders (Rubenstein). Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1135–1202) was by far the most influential figure in the formal “return of millennialism,” inspired by the book of Revelation (Reeves 1999; McGinn). Indeed, the 13th century might well be considered the Joachite century, in which his extraordinary exegesis of Revelation became a major source of thought (Olivier’s Commentary on Revelation) and action (The Great Allelulia of 1233, Flagellants of 1260); its influence continued to spread throughout subsequent centuries (Cohn; Reeves 1994; Rusconi; Smoller; Rossato).

By the 14th century, these exegeses inspired popular movements that showed virulent hostility to clergy, the rich, intellectuals, and Jews (Dolcinites, Shepherd’s Crusade). The Black Plague (1348–50) provoked a wide range of apocalyptic movements including the Flagellants, and in its aftermath a succession of peasant revolts (Jacquerie, English Peasant Revolt, Taborites, Müntzer and the German Peasant Revolt; Cohn; Bickle; Freedman). John of Rupeccisura elaborated the first explicit theological millennial scheme since late Antiquity, and his impact can be seen from his own time in France (Jacquerie) to 15th-century Bohemia (DeVun; Lerner).

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Richard Landes

B. Reformation and Early Modern Protestantism

Since Augustine, the millennium usually has been identified with the time of the church between Christ’s first and second coming. Catholics as well as Lutherans and Reformed condemned as chiliasm the literal interpretation of Rev 20 as referring to an earthly kingdom of Christ lasting for a thousand years before the last judgment. Despite its condemnation, the chiliasm idea of the millennium was renewed in certain Protestant circles, such as the Ana- baptists in Münster, who were defeated in 1535, and the Fifth Monarchy Men (cf. Dan 2:44) during Cromwell’s Commonwealth. In England there were several defenders of millennialism even before Cromwell. Thus the Calvinist John Foxe in his commentary on the book of Revelation Eiasmi seu Meditationes in Sacram Apocalypsin (1587) distinguished between seven periods of history, the last one being the millennium which begins about 2000. Thomas Brightman, another Calvinist Puritan differentiated between the millennium when Christ with his saints will reign on earth and the heavenly kingdom of God (Revelation of the Revelation, 1615). Joseph Mede, Clavis Apocalyptica (1627), expected the glorious Sabbath of the earthly reign of Christ after 6000 years of history, starting from the creation. For some in England, the Civil War was regarded as the prelude to the millennium. Thus in The Reign of Christ and the Saints with Him, on Earth, a Thousand Years (1653), the independent clergyman William Erbery imagined a time when God alone reigns in Men, so that the rule of Christ will be followed in love.

In Silesia, the Lutheran mystic Jakob Böhme (d. 1624) was thinking of a monarchy of Jesus in the near future, in which the earth will be transformed.
into heaven. Quirinus Kuhlmann (1651–1689) from Breslau (today Wroclaw) regarded Böhme as the prophet of the millennium. Kuhlmann equates the millennium with the “times of refreshing” (Acts 3:20), he himself being the “Kühlmonarch” or “Kühl-prophet” (monarch/prophet of refreshment). For the “Kühlreich” (kingdom of refreshment) he wrote in 1677–86 the “Kühlsalzer” (Psalter of refreshing). Lutheran spiritualism further influenced Pietism, in which the hope of better times was present in Philipp Jakob Spener’s Behauptung der Hoffnung künftiger bessener Zeiten (1693, Claiming the Hope for better Times). And as documented in his Lebensbeschreibung (1719, Biography), Spener’s friend Johann Wilhelm Petersen, together with his wife, supported chiliastic. The Swabian pietist Johann Albrecht Bengel (1719, Biography), trans. of id., in asm. The Swabian pietist Johann Albrecht Bengel (1719, Biography), trans. of id., in

American Christians teach one of three timings for the millennium. For most Americans after 1750, the Second Coming of Jesus will either inaugurate the Millennium ("premillennialism") or conclude its reign ("postmillennialism"). The question of timing is deeply entwined with the nature of the Millennium, with premillennialists emphasizing a sharper historical break and Jesus dispensing justice to a battered world from his throne in Jerusalem, and postmillennialists anticipating a more gradual inception of the millennium as evidenced through the perfection of human institutions and the successful conversion of peoples to Christianity.

While Millennialism has deep roots in Christian history, it was especially influential for early Puritan settlers fleeing the European Wars of Religion and English Civil War (1610–51). It has prospered since 1750 among American sects and movements including the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Adventists, Mormons, and fundamentalists. Though primarily associated with Protestant sectarians, millennialists have also been counted among mainline Protestants and Catholics.

Arguably the decisive characteristic of millennialism is a biblically-informed orientation toward the future — especially to the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. American millennialists have often contributed to a pervasive belief in American exceptionalism, regarding the United States or specific American churches as primary agents of the millennium. Common characteristics among all American millennialists include: 1) an interest in biblical prophecy, 2) criticism of contemporary society and global politics, 3) identification with an idealized American peoplehood or United States, and 4) a vision of the future that mixes biblical and American values.

Most of the major movements of American Protestantism, including the First Great Awakening (1720–45), Second Great Awakening (1800–35), Social Gospel movement (1880–1920), fundamentalism (1900–40), and the rise of the Christian Right (1970–2000) contained strong millennial elements. Likewise, periods of major social and geopolitical unrest also unleashed millennial expectations, including the American Revolution, French Revolution, American Civil War, industrialization, World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the invention of atomic weapons. The ubiquity of millennial “moments” through American history makes it an important and essential feature of American Christianity.

Before the 1830s, premillennialism remained a marginal view in American Christianity while postmillennialism captured clerical imagination. Jonathan Edwards, among other colonial-era clergy, retained a focus on European Christianity and the renewal of the church that would usher in the millennium. Edwards’ endorsement of the First Great Awakening was informed by his postmillennial expectation of a global revival. For many early Ameri-
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millennial visions with a focus on modern industrial and social problems. Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918), the most popular Social Gospel theologian in America before World War I, argued that by heeding Jesus’ teachings humans could realize the Millennium – the Kingdom of God – on earth. Though it is easy to overemphasize the shock of World War I to the vitality of the Social Gospel, postmillennialist anticipation of the kingdom’s realization ebbed as European and North American societies descended into two world wars.

By far, however, premillennialism remains the dominant millennialist strain in America. Major novels like the Left Behind series (1996–2011) by Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, selling more than sixty million copies, use dispensational teachings as a backdrop. Popular culture has absorbed premillennial concepts like the rapture and the Antichrist as fodder for comedies, dramas, and supernatural thrillers. More substantively, much of the current American evangelical leadership including James Dobson, Robert Jeffress, Franklin Graham, and John Hagee have situated biblical inerrancy and premillennialism as fixtures of their ministries. With the proliferation of digital media, the permutations and iterations on millennial teachings will continue to multiply in coming years and at once pay heed to and also dilute the legacy of dispensationalism.

**Bibliography:**

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D. East Asia

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Western European powers extended their colonial reach, and Christianity spread with equal rapidity. In this context, many indigenous Christians envisioned the end times and the coming of the millennial kingdom as a way of overcoming social and political turmoil.

In the mid-19th century Qing dynasty, Hong Xiuquan’s anticipation of the millennial kingdom influenced the Taiping Rebellion, a religious and political movement seeking to reform Chinese society. Xiuquan’s millennialist idea was grounded in the Bible, especially Rev 21, and engaged with ideas from other religious traditions, particularly Buddhism’s notion of a millennium and the Confucian idea of heaven’s mandate. A few decades after the end of the Taiping Rebellion, in the 1890s, Korean peasants formed the Tonghak rebellion to revolt against the Joseon dynasty. This was based on their millennial anticipation, developed in dialogue with Christianity and Korean religions, which strengthened their belief that they were responsible for establishing a heaven on earth that would free the
lower classes, including peasants, from oppression and injustice.

The encounter of Koreans with American Protestant missionaries deepened Korean Christian millennialist views in the early 20th century. American Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries influenced by Arthur T. Pierson, Adoniram J. Gordon, and Dwight L. Moody came to Korea when the Joseon dynasty was weakened by corruption and Japanese invasion. Their premillennial and postmillennial beliefs underpinned and motivated their mission to Korea. The dialogue between Korean eschatology and millennialism enabled Korean Christians to lead the millennial movement. One of these leaders, Seon-ju Gil, developed an eschatology after converting to Christianity and reading the book of Revelations which, he believed, proclaimed the imminent coming of Christ, the end of Japan’s colonial rule, and the millennium to follow. He recorded his beliefs in his book, Malsehak and spread them by preaching throughout Korea during the 1920s and 1930s. For him, the coming of Christ, which would occur when the gospel was preached to all people, would be the end of the world rather than a reformation of the present world.

African Christians’ interest in millennialism was no less obvious than Christians in other parts of the world. Even though Christianity spread in Africa before the arrival of Europeans, brutal encounters with European powers and their missionaries intensified millennial anticipation throughout the continent. British colonial rule in early 20th century Nyasaland (present-day Malawi) triggered Central African millennial movements. The encounter of Eliot Kamwana with Joseph Booth, a British missionary, led Kamwana to the Watch Tower Movement. This was a millennial social movement that later developed into the independent Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Chililimbwe uprising in 1915, led by John Chilembwe, a Baptist pastor educated in Central Africa. The Chilembwe uprising in 1915, led Kamwana to the Watch Tower Movement. This was a millennial social movement that later developed into the independent Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Chililimbwe uprising in 1915, led by John Chilembwe, a Baptist pastor educated in Central Africa. The Chilembwe uprising in 1915, led Kamwana to the Watch Tower Movement. This was a millennial social movement that later developed into the independent Jehovah’s Witnesses.

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Youngwha Kim

IV. Literature

The poet John Milton, who was taught by Joseph Mede at Christ’s College, Cambridge, in his Areopagitica (1644) was convinced that God would reveal his new and great period first to his fellow English. In Milton’s Paradise Lost (1667/74) the archangel Michael prophesies to the fallen Adam a millennial restoration, a paradise on earth happier than Eden. Like Milton, several Puritans were convinced that England would be the seat of Christ’s millennial reign, whereas others, who like John Winthrop went to America, thought the same of New England. In his poem “The Day of Doom” (1662), the Puritan minister Michael Wiggleworth identified the beginning of the millennium with the Final Judgment which brings the division of the elect from the damned.

In Friedrich Nicolai’s novel Das Leben und die Meinungen des Herrn Magister Sebaldus Nothanker (1773–76, The Life and Opinions of Minister Sebaldus Nothanker) the Lutheran minister Sebaldus reads Johann Albrecht Bengel as well as Christian August Crusius. His hobby-horse – an idea the author takes from Sterne’s novel Tristram Shandy (1759–67) – being the book of Revelation, Sebaldus relates all negative events occurring in it to France as his private enemy. Nicolai’s caricature reflects the critique of chiliasm by the Enlightenment theology which Nicolai espoused.

The earthly kingdom of God was the common motto of Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin who in his novel Hyperion (1797–99) and his poems “Brot und Wein” (1800/01, “Bread and Wine”) and “Friedensfeier” (1801, “Celebration of Peace”) announced this future reconciliation of humankind, nature, and God. Quite similarly the poet and philosopher Novalis in his essay Die Christenheit oder Europa (1799, Christianity or Europe) discusses the holy time of eternal peace which he identifies with the millennium and the kingdom of God as well. It was Ludwig Tieck who recommended Böhme’s Aurora to Novalis, who in turn in his poem “An Tieck” (1800, “To Tieck”) refers to Böhme’s prophecy of a millennium (on Böhme, see also above “III. Christianity B. Reformation and Early Modern Protestantism”).

Johann Albrecht Bengel passed on the belief in a millennium to the founder of Methodism, John Wes-
ley, who was convinced that Christ’s kingdom would begin in 1836. But as in Germany, in Britain the millennium came to be secularized through the identification of its beginning with the French Revolution. The Swedenborgian poet and painter William Blake in the first book of his incomplete poem *The French Revolution* (1791) thus let the Abbé Sieyès announce the millennial kingdom in which monarchs give up the red robe of terror and the crown of oppression. In Blake’s late poem *The Everlasting Gospel* (1818) it is Jesus who binds Satan in his chain and establishes his revolutionary heterodox kingdom. William Wordsworth too in his autobiographical poem *The Prelude* (1805) remembers the early days of the French Revolution as the promise of a rebirth of mankind. Before he started his collaboration with Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, together with Robert Southey, was inspired by the Revolution to plan a utopian community, “Pantisocracy,” in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in the U.S. In his early poem “Religious Musings” (1794–96), the Revolution means the downfall of religious establishments but also the return of pure faith at the beginning of the millennium in which the human being enjoys the highest glory and such heroes of humankind as Milton, Isaac Newton, and Joseph Priestley will reign before the passing away of this world and our entering the state of pure intellect.

The idea of the millennium again became important in socialist literature, such as Wilhelm Weitling’s *Evangelium des armen Sünders* (1846, Gospel of the Poor Sinner) and Andreas Dietzsch’s *Das Tausendjährige Reich* (1843, The Thousand-Year Reich, or The millennial empire). Weitling identified the millennium with the earthly kingdom of God as the reign of the poor and suppressed. In Russia the millennial hopes were present even before the Revolution of 1917, inspired by the socialist ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. In his *A Writer’s Diary* (Dnevnik pisatelja, 1873–81), Fyodor Dostoevsky saw orthodox Russia as the elect nation to bring the millennium as an earthly paradise, and the story *A Short Story of the Anti-Christ* (Kratkaja povest’ ob anti- christe, 1900) written by his pupil Vladimir Solovyov ends with the foundation of the millennium. In his tragedy *Emperor and Galilean* (Keiser og Galilæer, 1873), Henrik Ibsen identified the millennium with the Third Empire as a synthesis of Paganism and Christianity, Tree of Knowledge and Tree of the cross. That the millennium will begin very soon is also preached by some pious workmen in Gerhart Hauptmann’s novel *The Fool in Christ Emanuel Quint* (Der Narr in Christo Emanuel Quint, 1910). “Millennium” here connotes the object of hope: “longing of the soul for salvation, purity, liberation, happiness, and, generally speaking, perfection. Some called it social state; others freedom or paradise, and still others the millennium or heavenly realm” (Maurer: 147). In Robert Musil’s unfinished three-volumed novel *The Man Without Qualities* (Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, 1930–38) the hope of Ulrich and his sister Agatha is directed towards the millennium as a mystic condition of love quite different from all other conditions of life.

In his first drama *Es steht geschrieben* (1945–46, *It is Written*) the Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt puts the idea of the millennium in the form of the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster on stage, reflecting the history of the German Nationalists. The protagonist Johann Bockelson (= Jan van Leyden) proclaims:

> We, King Bockelson Johann van Leyden, ... had the Herrschaft dieser Stadt übernommen ... Nun aber kommt es uns zu, die Herrschaft der Täufer auszubreiten, um das Reich Gottes in seiner Herrlichkeit auf Erden zu errichten und so den Lauf der Geschichte zu krönen ...)

In Dürrenmatt’s *Die Wiedertäufer* (1966–67, *The Anabaptists*), a new version of the play *Es steht geschrieben* as a comedy, the leader of the Münster Anabaptists Jan Matthysen (= Jan Mathys) calls out: Brothers, as the Prophet of the Anabaptists, I take possession of the city of Münster in the name of the Lord ... to build the kingdom of God within these walls ... The kingdom of God is pressing. It shakes at the gates and calls in with a loud voice. (Dürrenmatt 1998: 16, 43; trans. authors)

(Đrüber, ich nehme als Prophet der Täufer im Namen des Herrn von der Stadt Münster Besitz ... [sc. um] das Reich Gottes in diesen Mauern zu errichten ... Das Reich Gottes drängt. Es rüttelt ungeduldig an den Toren und fordert mit lauter Stimme Einlaß.)

And Matthysen promises: “A new Jerusalem will arise in your walls, Münster” (Dürrenmatt 1998: 15; trans. authors).

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**V. Film**

Perhaps the first movie about the coming of the millennium was Carlos Baptista’s *The Rapture* (1941, US). The short film depicts the events of the Rapture but is largely silent regarding the period of Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom (Waliss: 3–4).

More recently, a series of novels by Christian evangelical minister Tim LaHaye received filmic treatment. The first of these was *Left Behind: The Movie* (dir. Vic Sarin, 2000, CA). It portrays the Rapture and its aftermath and concludes at the beginning of the seven years of tribulation. (This movie was remade in 2014 with the title *Left Behind*, dir. Vic Armstrong, US/CA). Subsequent films in the series, *Left Behind II: Tribulation Force* (dir. Bill Corcoran, 2002, US/CA) and *Left Behind III: World at War* (dir. Craig R. Baxley, 2005, US/CA), portray events after the Rapture that include the rise of the Antichrist and the advent of World War III.

The 1991 movie *The Rapture* (dir. Michael Tolkin, US) uses the advent of the millennium as a way to explore theological issues such as the nature of God and the importance of human autonomy. The plot involves a woman who, when confronted by the Rapture, refuses to forgive God for evil in the world. Carl Greiner observes, “The film is daring in content, as in its presentation of infanticide, mental confusion, and a (re-)vengeful God. It is an unnerving and demanding visual experience, delivering to its audience a sense of dislocation, question, and horror” (1997: 2).


Finally, a documentary about premillennialist believers called *Waiting for Armageddon* (dir. Kate Davis/David Heilbroner/Franco Sacchi, 2009, US) highlights Christian millennialist beliefs about Israel.


*Theresa Sanders*

**See also →** Apocalypses and Apocalypticism; → Eschatology; → Messianic Age; → Millenarism