

Millennialism

- Review of Week 1
 - Millennialism is the idea that Christ will reign on earth for 1000 years and often considered apocalyptic (supernatural and cataclysmic)
 - Forms have existed since before Christ and in other religions
 - 4 major Christian views today – Pre(2), Post, A
 - The C of C has a history of various teachings
 - Jesus doesn't know when he's returning
 - Hasn't stopped people thru time predicting it
 - Many people have died over this idea
 - Where did this idea come from? Rev 20:4

Millennialism

- Review of Week 2
 - Early church believed in historic premillennialism – Justin Martyr (100-165 AD)
 - Many apocalyptic millennialist movements Montanists, Donatists, Novatianists, Meletians
 - Due to constant non fulfilled predictions, antiauthoritarianism and carnal expectations, three alternatives emerged – Sabbatical, Spiritual, Roman Empire
 - Rome sacked in 410, Christians blamed
 - Augustine *City of God*: Rome's moral decline was the cause and taught an allegorical Millennium and began with Christ's work on the cross
 - Eventually, he and Jerome endorsed AM II but Augustine's amillennialism was the official position of the church and still is today in Catholicism

Medieval Millennialism

- After Augustine there was a radical split in millennial discussion
 - 1. The texts endorse Augustine's position
 - 2. The continued use of AM II (Jesus returns in 801 AD) and eventually the practice of “counting down” to the year 6000 indicates that the debates continued
 - End of the Roman Empire in 476 AD – entrance to the Middle Ages

Medieval Millennialism

- Imagine how catastrophic the fall of Rome was to those people
- **Acts 17:22** Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill ...²⁶ God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;²⁷ that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:²⁸ for in him we live, and move, and have our being.

Medieval Millennialism

- Gregory o Tours (early Frank Historian) tells about the False Christ of Bourges, a peasant who, in the aftermath of a terrible plague in AD 591, presented himself as Christ and was widely greeted by enthusiastic crowds.
- The bishop of Clermont had the peasant assassinated and tortured Mary who had traveled with him but his disciples continued to spread word of him throughout Gaul.
- Gregory stated in his *History of Franks* that since this man came in 5790 and not 6000, then clearly he is a “false Christ.”

For many will come in
my name, saying, 'I am
the Christ,' and they
will lead many astray.

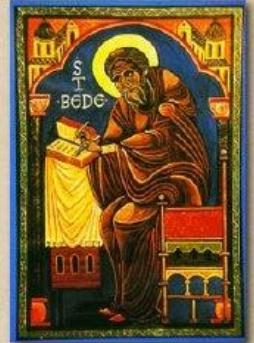
- Matt 24:5

Medieval Millennialism

- The same uneasiness that had appeared among Augustine and his colleagues in the 5900s with AM I emerged as AM II entered its 5900s (700s AD).
- This time the Venerable Bede played the role of Augustine, and “corrected” AM II to AM III (Jesus born in 3952 AM, 6000 in AD 2048).

bede the venerable

- monk at monasteries of wearmouth and jarrow in northumbria
- may have come from noble family
- name from oe beda, ‘prayer’?
- entered when 7 years old
- wrote over 60 books

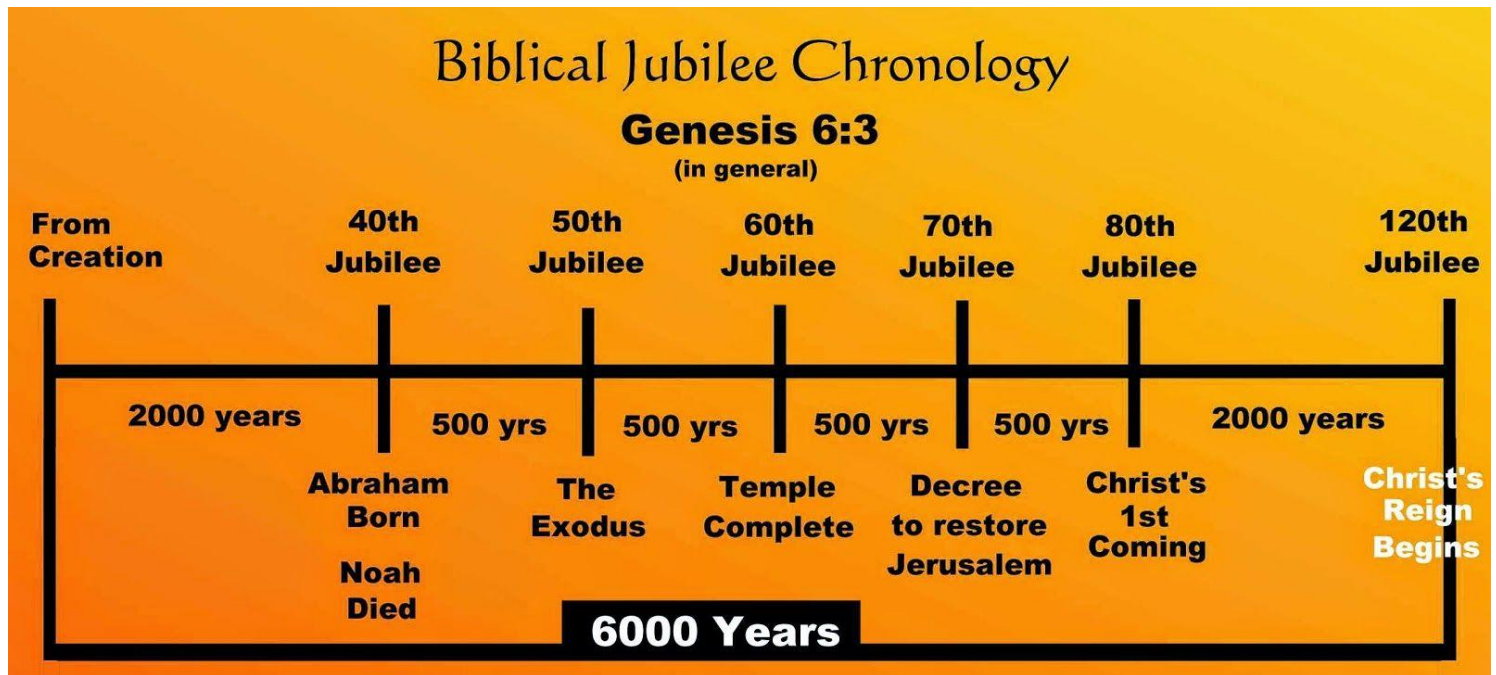


bede: 673-735

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Medieval Millennialism

- **Sabbatical millennium AM III – Jesus Return 2048 AD**



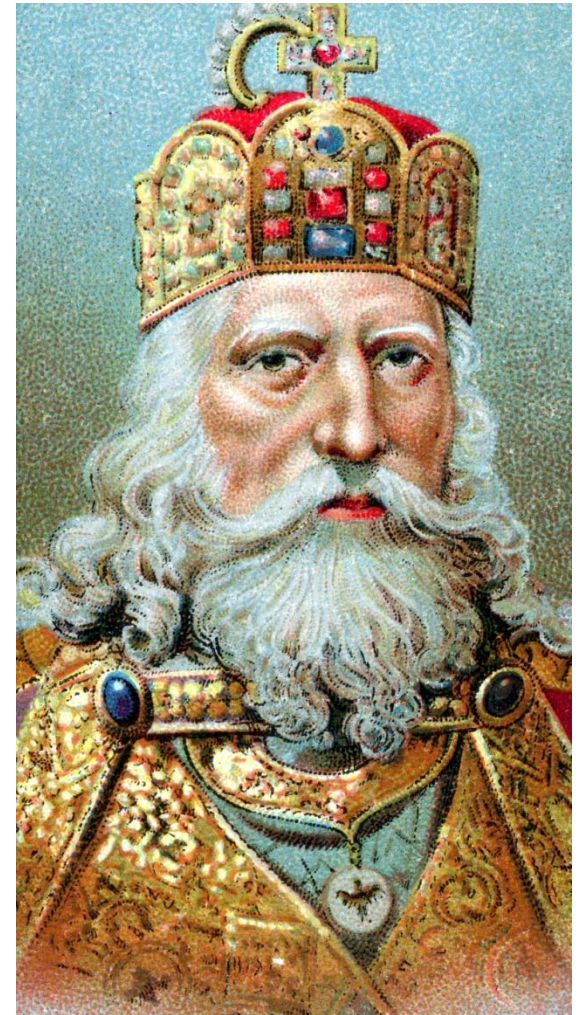
Medieval Millennialism

- He devised the BC / AD system calculated from the Incarnation, the *anno Domini* (AD; Latin: “in the year of the Lord)
- His book, *The Reckoning of Time*, concluded with a quote from Augustine’s response to Hesychius regarding the proper eschatological attitude...
 - Chapter 68: Augustine’s Letter 199 “If we say that the Lord will come soon, we risk, however sincere our motives, bringing discredit upon the faith if we are wrong. But if we remain agnostic, or acknowledge that His coming may be delayed, we can only be pleasantly surprised if we are wrong, and we put no one’s faith in peril.”
- By the mid-590s (750s AD) Bede’s chronology and Easter Tables were adopted widely



Medieval Millennialism

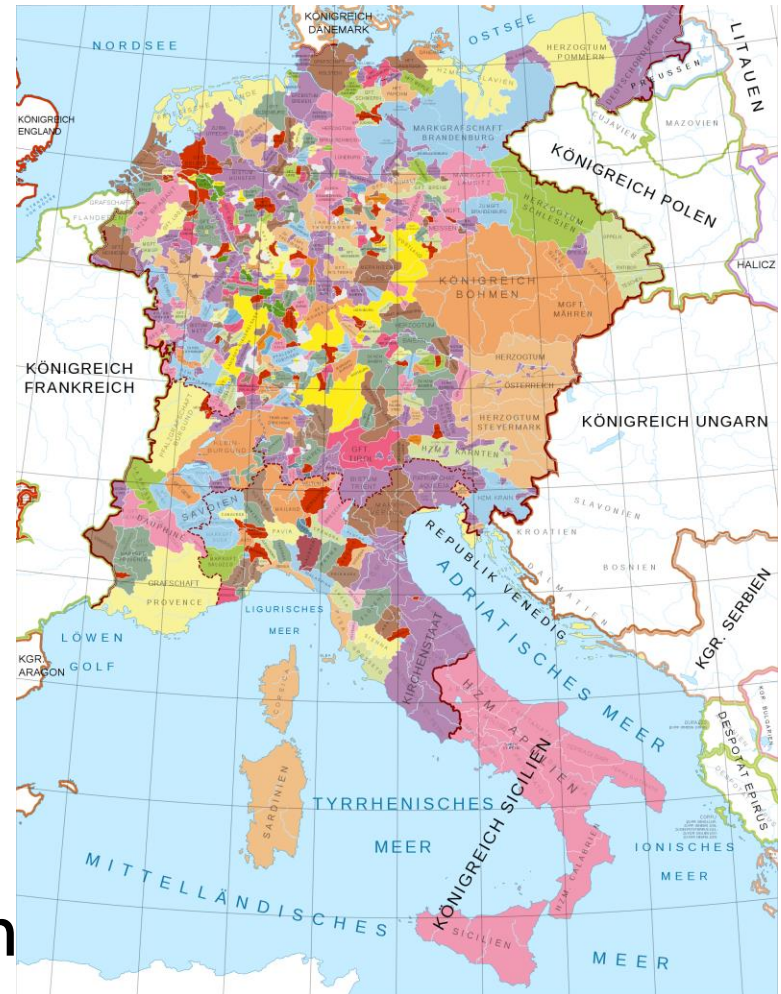
- Did church leaders lose track of the nearing apocalyptic date of 801 AD?
- On the first day of the year AD corresponding to 6000 (801; 800 according to the modern calendar, which starts the new year on January 1), Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne emperor in Rome.



Charlemagne

Medieval Millennialism

- This was a dramatic act to restore the Roman Empire by allying a Christian emperor with the Pope to dominate the political and cultural scene which for some revived imperial millennialism



Medieval Millennialism

- With the passing of 6000 (801 AD), the failure of the empire to provide stability, and waves of apocalyptic fears arose with the devastation wrought by the Hungarian, Norse, and Muslim invasions.
- Fear of historical events in each lifetime seem to reactivate millennial fears or enthusiasm!



Medieval Millennialism

- Another interpretation of Augustine's view and the sabbatical millennium argued that that either the year 1000 or the year 1033 would mark the millennium's end. This view had two distinct advantages:
 - (1) it was not strictly millennial, in that the coming apocalyptic moment was the end rather than the beginning of the terrestrial millennium, and
 - (2) it permitted ecclesiastical leaders of the 8th and 9th centuries to redate the End to the "distant" future of the 11th century.

Medieval Millennialism

- Thiota, a false prophetess, came to Mainz, in Germany, in 847 announcing that the world would end the next year and attracted believers among both commoners and clerics
- One of the few arguments available to opposing clerics was that used by Gregory o Tours: there were still 150 years remaining to wait.



Mainz Cathedral

Medieval Millennialism

- The years AD 1000 and 1033 represent the end of the sabbatical millennium
- No other year in Western history receives as much attention from historians and computists
- Like AM I (AD 500), there was a wide range of apocalyptic behavior
- Is there something magical about nice round numbers?



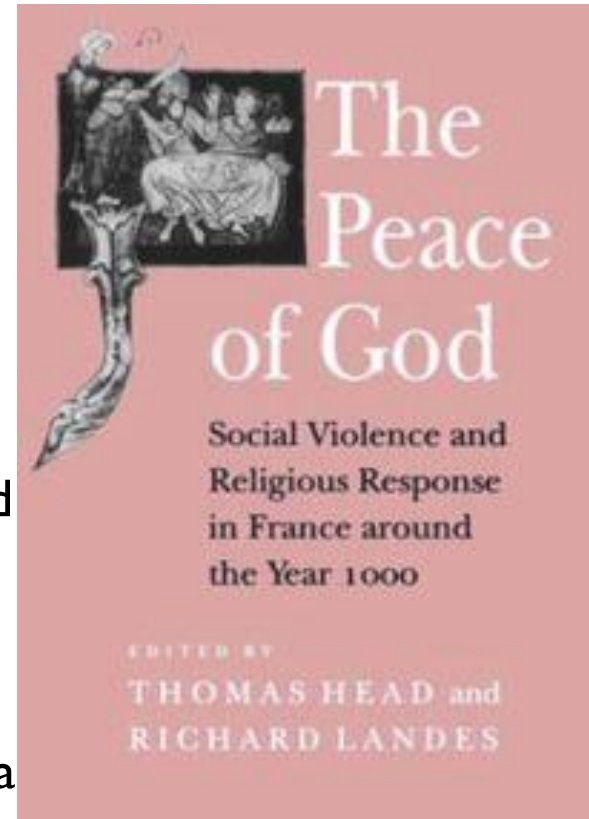
Medieval Millennialism

- In Germany, the young emperor Otto III used apocalyptic symbols and created the “Bamberg Apocalypse”, an illuminated manuscript of the book of Revelation
- Otto was allied with Pope Sylvester II and to demonstrate imperial millennialism, he visited Charlemagne’s tomb on the Pentecost of 1000



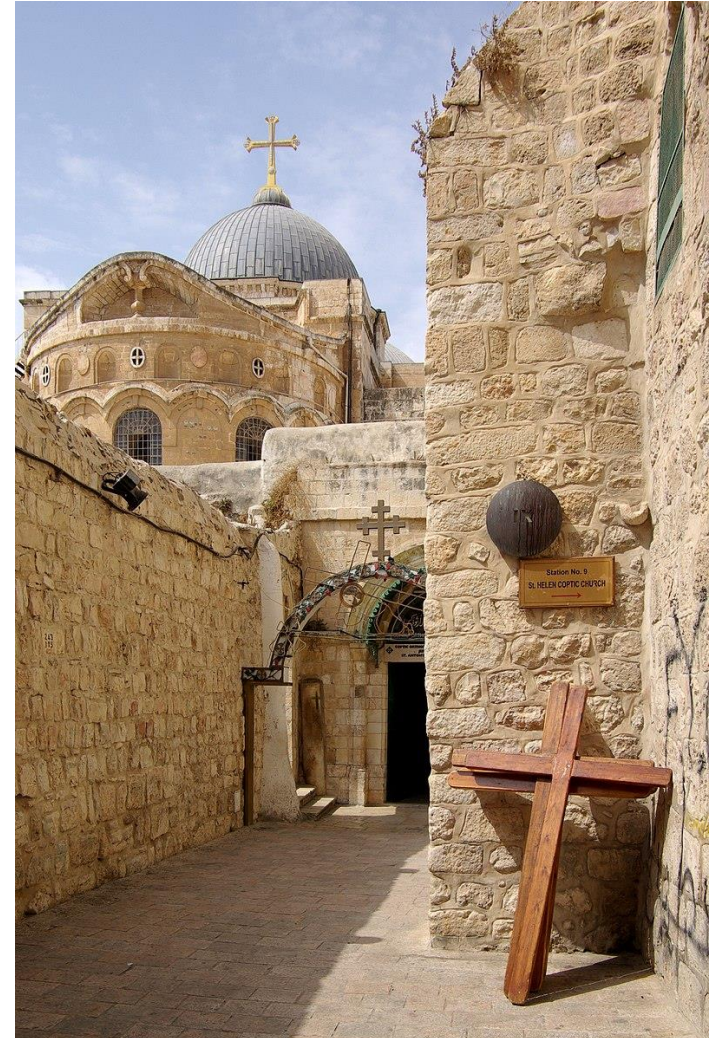
Medieval Millennialism

- In France (not part of the Holy Roman Empire), millennialism came from the people...
 - The Peace of God movement
 - Relic cults and pilgrimages
 - Penitential processions
 - Apostolic communities
 - Popular charismatic preachers
- The Peace of God movement represented the first major popular expression of millennialism that was encouraged by the clerical and lay elite.
- Historians of the early 11th century use unusually optimistic language to describe a “new dawn” or a vast renewal



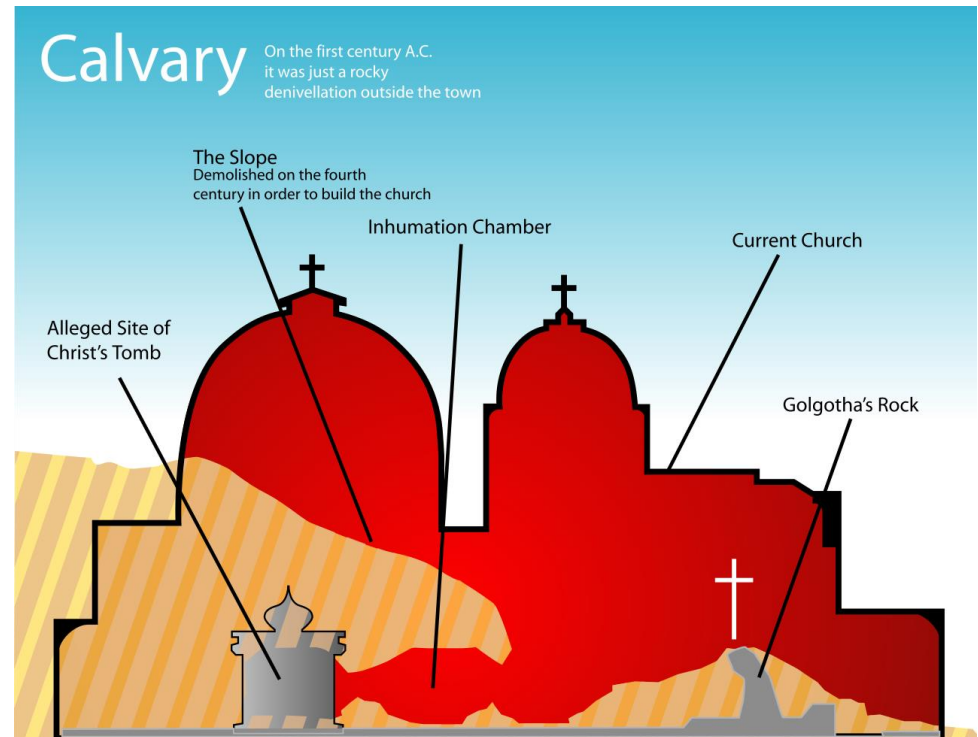
Medieval Millennialism

- When the final drama did not come in 1000, many millennialists “redated” to 1033.
- In the year 1009, al-Ḥākim, the messianic caliph of Cairo, destroyed the Holy Sepulchre and forced Christians to convert to his Shīite Islam.
- The combination caused France to experience a second climactic wave of peace assemblies and pilgrimages to Jerusalem.



Medieval Millennialism

- Constantine the Great first built 336 CE
- Burned by Persians in 614
- Restored by Modestus an abbot
- Destroyed by the caliph al-Hākim bi-Amr Allāh about 1009
- Restored by Constantine IX
- Rebuilt by 12th century Crusaders
- Since that time, frequent repair
- The present church dates mainly from 1810.



Medieval Millennialism

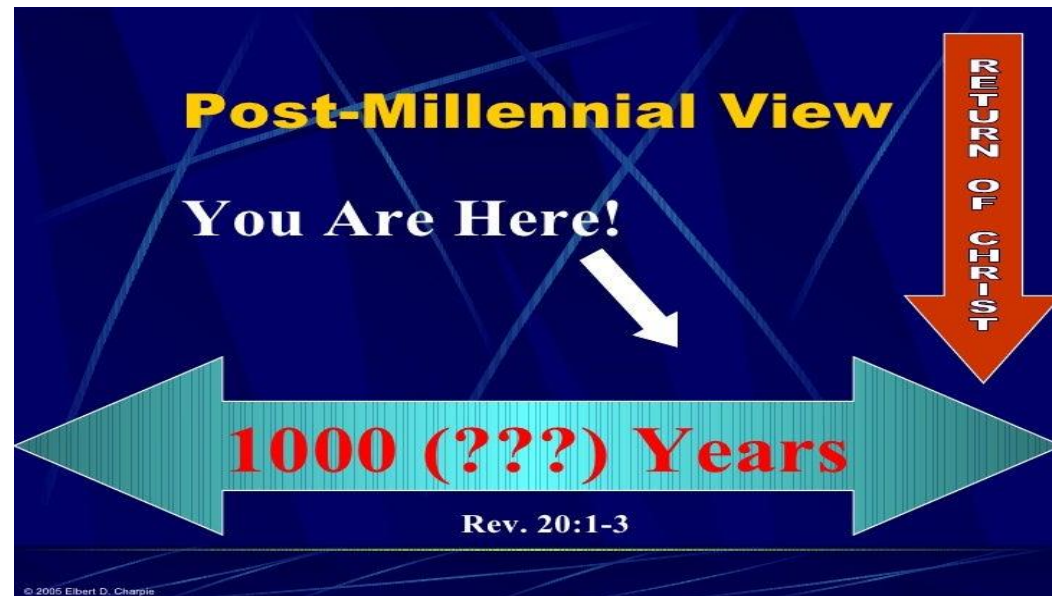
- By 1022 concern over the spread of heresy was so great among the French clergy that heretics were executed for the first time in European history.
- The Cluniac historian Radulfus Glaber described the vast assembled masses at these peace councils as shouting “Peace! Peace! Peace!” and believing that they had formed a covenant with God.

Medieval Millennialism

- You'd think the years 1000 and 1033 passing without the return of Jesus would squelch apocalyptic expectations in western Europe but instead it just profoundly changed them.
- Instead, the Peace of God movement introduced a new and more creative and popular millennial movement spurred by the remarkable innovation of the peace councils - bishops and counts, abbots and kings

Medieval Millennialism

- The Peace of God was the most enduring and powerful wave of millennial thinking in the High Middle Ages and the first successful **postmillennial** movement, meaning that for the first time adherents believed that the dramatic improvement of the world could come about not only as a result of Jesus' appearance but through the work of good people.
- So, good people can bring about the return of Christ?



Medieval Millennialism

- While popular "messiahs" continued to appear, the period after the year 1000 was characterized by vaster movements, often approved by church authorities.
- The First Crusade revived the popular enthusiasm for both the peace and pilgrimage movements of 1033 in new and more aggressive forms: from peace in Christendom to war against the infidel, from penitential pilgrimage to armed Crusade.



Medieval Millennialism

- Peter the Hermit, another popular “messiah” managed to win approval from the church hierarchy for his millennial enthusiasm.
- Over time, however, some of these popular movements developed a militantly hostile attitude toward church authority, intellectuals, the wealthy, Jews, and others, thus provoking the most violent and revolutionary elements of millennialism.



Medieval Millennialism

- Millennial hopes and ambitions reached new levels as a result of the work of Joachim of Fiore, the first officially approved theologian to reject Augustine and return to a notion of a future millennium.



Medieval Millennialism

- Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202) said that there were three great ages of history:
 - (1) that of the Law
 - (2) that of the Gospel
 - (3) that of the Holy Spirit
- His eschatology revitalized medieval millennialism, and soon after his death, prophecies attributed to him were linked to **current events** and were believed to predict an **imminent** apocalypse.

Medieval Millennialism

- **St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)**
 - His thoughts on millennialism ...
 - Couldn't find anything
 - More interested in Philosophy like reason vs faith

Medieval Millennialism

- The Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, and other 14th century catastrophes further fueled the desire for final divine intervention.
- **Black Death**, ravaged Europe between 1347 and 1351, killing about a third of the population.



Medieval Millennialism

- In 1356 the Franciscan John of Roquetaillade prophesied that plagues, a revolt by the poor, and the appearance of Antichrists in Rome and Jerusalem would be followed in 1367 by the ascendance of a reforming pope, the election of a king of France as the Holy Roman emperor, and the onset of a millennial reign of peace and prosperity.



Medieval Millennialism

- Popular, often revolutionary millennialism continued in the 14th century as well.
- Thousands of peasants, or Pastoureaux (“Shepherds”), swept through the French countryside in 1251 and emerged again in 1320, believing they could bring about Jesus’ return by freeing the Holy Land.



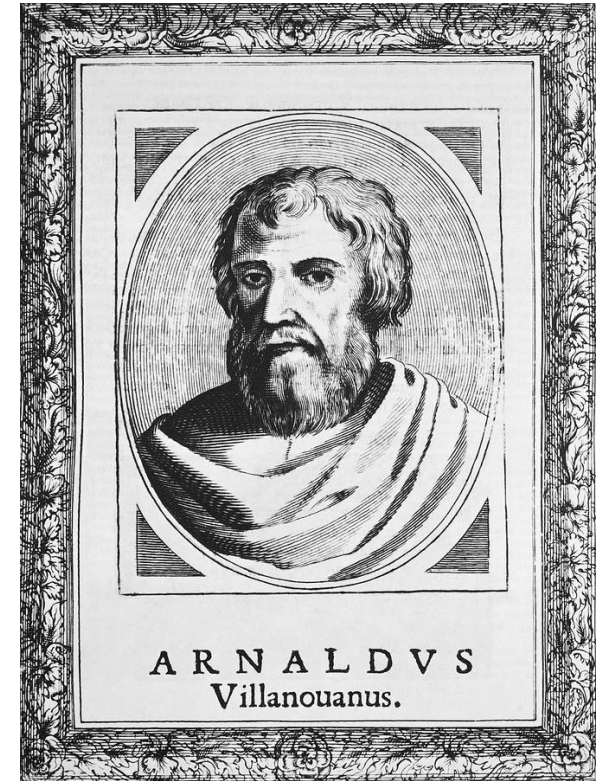
Medieval Millennialism

- The Black Death caused a short supply of labor that gave commoners an economic advantage
- The aristocracy responded by instituting authoritarian labor laws and wage restrictions ripening the people for revolts
- Apocalyptic preachers such as John Ball, led the English Peasants' Revolt of 1381, 20,000 stormed London.



Medieval Millennialism

- At the beginning of the 14th century, Arnold of Villanova identified a date some 70 years in the future as the millennial moment, which the pope found far more favorable than the more immediate prophecies of Fra Dolcino, a member of the Apostolic Brethren who preached the imminent fall of the religious and political order.



Medieval Millennialism

- Other millennial groups appeared, forming powerful and enduring countercultures such as the Hussites (reformed Christian group) in 15th-century Bohemia (Czech), whose violent Taborite wing of true believers was intent on bringing about the millennial kingdom at any cost.
- (Tabor is traditional name of mountain of the transfiguration and on which Jesus would return, Mk 13)



Medieval Millennialism

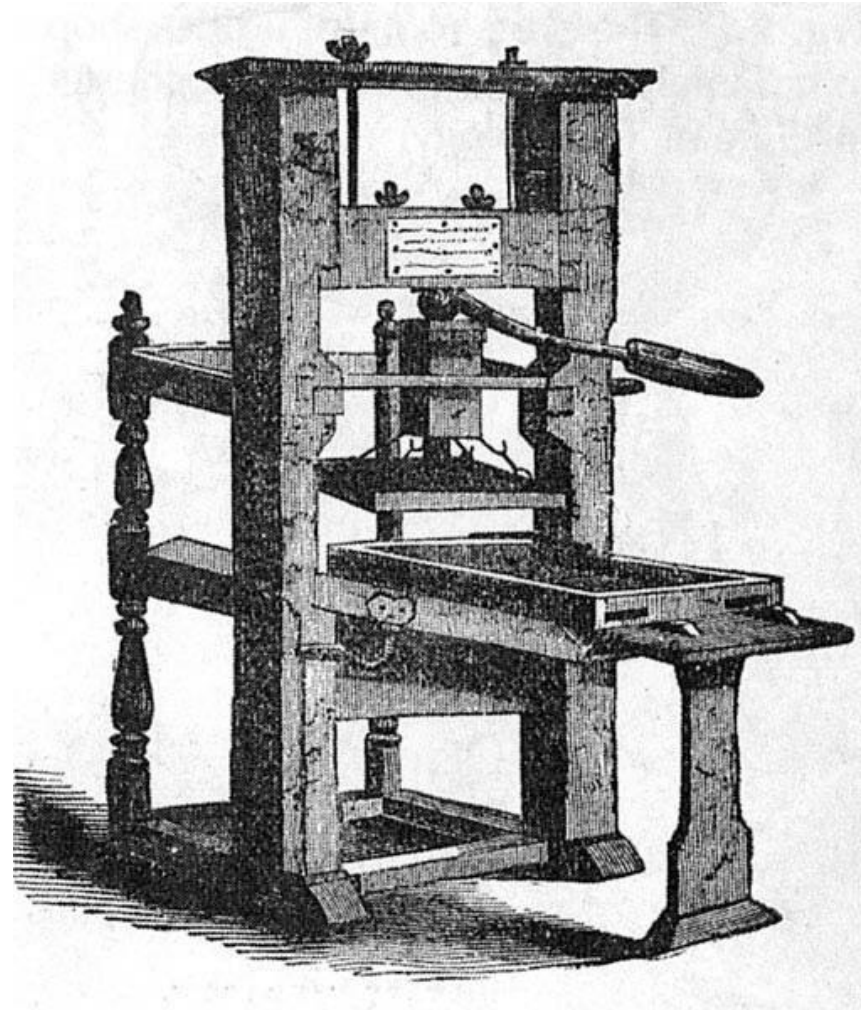
- Messianic preachers throughout the Middle Ages continually calculated new dates for the apocalypse in addition to the sabbatical dates ...
 - 5900s AM I Return 500 AD (AD 400s)
 - 5900s AM II Return 800 AD (AD 700s)
 - 5900s AM III Return 2048 AD (AD 2000s)
- Millennial beliefs and aspirations had a tremendous impact on social change in the Middle Ages.

Medieval Millennialism

- **Be Ready!**
- **Mark 13:32** “But as for that day or hour no one knows it—neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son—except the Father. ³³ Watch out! Stay alert! For you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey. He left his house and put his slaves in charge, assigning to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to stay alert. ³⁵ Stay alert, then, because you do not know when the owner of the house will return—whether during evening, at midnight, when the rooster crows, or at dawn— ³⁶ or else he might find you asleep when he returns suddenly. ³⁷ What I say to you I say to everyone: Stay alert!”

Medieval Millennialism

- The invention of the printing press in the 1450s, made it easier to disseminate millennial ideas and harder to suppress them.
- And so the middle ages lasted 800 to a 1000 years



Reformation Millennialism

- Next week ...