

Studies in Jewish Civilization,
Volume 12:
Millennialism from the Hebrew Bible
to the Present

Editors

Leonard J. Greenspoon
Ronald A. Simkins

The Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization

 **Center
for the Study
of Religion and Society**

**CREIGHTON
UNIVERSITY
PRESS**



Apocalyptic Schemes and Dreams: How
an Ancient Jewish Vision of the Future
Came to Dominate the Modern World

James D. Tabor

In just a few months we will all **know**. Will the arrival of the year 2000, and the ushering in of the third millennium, turn out to be “business as usual”—with all the media hype and apocalyptic hysteria gradually fading away into the all-too-familiar flow of **daily** life? Or will that magical number, so full of symbolic, cultural, and religious meaning, end up signaling something far more significant—something cosmic in its implications? While the question itself is silly to some, mildly important to others, to millions more there is no subject more serious, in this “year of the Lord,” 1999, with the days ticking off as in some kind of countdown. A CNN poll taken January 18, 1999, asked, “Do you think there is some kind of significance to the date January 1, 2000?” Thirty-three percent answered yes, 64 percent no, with only three percent responding that they did not know.

In some ways the year 2000 and the decades following are already becoming somewhat ordinary. Most of us are carrying around credit cards in our wallets with expiration dates marked 00, 01, or 02—and they actually work. We commonly read all kinds of budgetary and financial projections taking us well into the twenty-first century. And in the United States we are gearing up for the presidential election in November 2000. Besides, as Arthur Clarke has reminded us, despite all our plans for transition and celebration, the new millennium actually does not begin with the passing of midnight this coming December 31, 1999—but one year later, as we enter 2001. Nevertheless, I doubt that anyone is going to alter plans for this coming New Year’s Eve because of this technicality.

More than five years ago I had a telephone call from the chief religion editor of the Associated Press. He was chairing a meeting in New York of his fellow religion editors from all the major print media. They were considering how they would cover the upcoming millennium and what its

Distributed by the University of Nebraska Press

relevance might be for religion in general and, more particularly, for any potential revival of apocalypticism. Someone at the meeting had raised the question as to whether the millennium actually began on January 1, 2000, or January 1, 2001. Since I had established something of a reputation for knowing such millennial technicalities, I was one of the experts consulted. I assured the group that although properly speaking the millennium would begin with the year 2001, they might as well forget it—the year 2000 had clearly already won the day.

One can rationally argue that our 2000 mark is purely arbitrary. After all, the Christian year 2000 will be the year 5760 on the Hebrew calendar, which marks the years from “creation” based on rabbinic tradition; and it will be the year 1420 by Muslim reckoning, measured in lunar years from the date Mohammed fled Mecca in 622 CE. The Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Aztecs, and Mayans, not to mention the Chinese and Japanese, have all had their own separate ways of marking times and measuring the passing of historical eras. None of these give any significance whatever to the year 2000 on the Gregorian calendar, even though it has become our secular global standard.

Arbitrary or not, this extraordinary focus on the new millennium is not going to go away; it is only going to increase, involving as it does a complex set of converging circumstances and perceptions, often contradictory, that are drawing in the media, marketing, government, information technologies, politics, and religion. The *Wall Street Journal* published a special “Millennium Report” as a thick supplement to its January 11, 1999 issue. It surveyed various aspects of human culture and society over the past 1000 years and included an ingenious mock-up “front-page” of how the paper might have covered the news on January 1, 1000. The *New York Times* has announced a special series of six in-depth reports, spaced over the year and called the “Millennium Series,” for their Sunday magazine. These issues will highlight ten centuries of human experience—“the ideas and achievements, profundities and absurdities that have defined our civilization over the past thousand years—and those that will lead us into the next thousand.” The splashy two page ad announcing the series was headlined: “January 1, 2000 : . . . The biggest birthday any of us will ever live through.” Both papers are geared to an upbeat, optimistic, decidedly non-apocalyptic approach to the subject.

Whether newspaper, magazine, or TV, it seems that everyone is planning some kind of special ongoing coverage of the millennium. A simple search of the Internet yields over 390,000 Web sites that mention either the term

“Year 2000” or “millennium.” The books are also beginning to appear. John Updike’s latest novel, set in the year 2020, is appropriately titled *Toward the End of Time*.¹ In the spring of 1999, Robert Stone published *Damascus Gate*,² a novel set in Jerusalem that features a self-proclaimed messiah and his followers who plan to bring on the end through bombing the Muslim Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. In his current best-seller, *A Man in Full*,³ Tom Wolfe offers his analysis of American culture at the turn of the age, while pitching the restoration of the ancient Stoic philosophy of Epictetus (“Life in Atlanta on the cusp of the millennium, as Old South values collide with a new world” reads the *New York Times* piece). Stephen Jay Gould’s *Questioning the Millennium: A Rationalist’s Guide* and Damain Thompson’s *The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium* were two of the most recent non-fictional analyses of the phenomenon.⁴ At the 1998 Frankfurt Book Fair I counted over fifty titles, mostly in English, dealing in some way with aspects of the coming millennium—and that did not include the technical works addressing the Y2K (Year 2000) computer glitch. Neale Walsch’s best-selling trilogy, *Conversations with God*, claims to be nothing less than “a message from God,” that promises a “social, sexual, educational, political, economic, and theological revolution on this planet the likes of which we have never seen, and seldom imagined.”⁵ The “dawn of the Age of Aquarius” is no longer a pop-Sixties catchphrase. It is the serious agenda of millions, as witnessed by the phenomenal sales of James Redfield’s *The Celestine Prophecy*, which heralds an “emerging planetary culture” set to make a “quantum leap” into the new millennium.⁶

All the main book chains have extensive sections devoted to what one might loosely call “New Age” spirituality, more often than not connected to the coming millennium. The sixteenth century writings of Nostradamus, who pinpointed the years from 1999–2003 as a time of great turmoil and transition, are enjoying a great revival.⁷ The most cited passage is *Centuries* Quatrain X:72: “The year 1999, seven months, from the sky will come a great King of Terror, he will bring to life the great king of the Mongols. Before and after Mars [War] reigns with good success.” This is apparently the only prediction by Nostradamus that specifies a precise date: July 1999. Some have seen the sighting of the new comet Lee, late last summer, as the predicted herald of the King of the Mongols; that is, the Antichrist. In Quatrain X:74 Nostradamus writes of “the age of the great millennium when the dead will come out of their graves,” speaking of our own time—the year 1999 and beyond. At the same time the evangelical Christian book

market is currently saturated with several dozen popular titles offering a completely opposite perspective. Most of them are oriented toward surviving an imminent apocalyptic disaster based upon interpretations of biblical prophecy, much in the tradition of Hal Lindsey's all-time bestseller *The Late Great Planet Earth* (sales of over 20 million since 1970).⁸ Pope John Paul II has declared the Year 2000 a special Jubilee for celebration and reconciliation, and millions of pilgrims are expected to visit the Holy Land, perhaps including the Pope himself.⁹

The Israelis are pulling out all the stops to prepare for an overflow of visitors, but also to guard against what they perceive as "doomsday" groups that might turn to violence, or even suicide, in fulfillment of certain prophecies from the book of Revelation. They have set up a special task force, which includes an undercover team drawn from the Mossad intelligence agency, the Shin Bet security service, and Israeli police.¹⁰ On January 8, 1999, the Israelis deported fourteen members of a Denver-based apocalyptic group called the Concerned Christians, based on reports that their leader, Monte Kim Miller (not among the deportees), had said he was destined to die in the streets of Jerusalem in the final days of December 1999.¹¹ And just this fall, a group of 25 Irish Catholic pilgrims were turned away at the Israeli port in Haifa for fear that they too shared some kind of apocalyptic visions of the future. The Irish government has issued a formal protest, holding that the whole episode is one of mistaken identity and overzealous paranoia on the part of the Israelis.¹² The Israelis have coordinated their efforts with the FBI and are sharing intelligence and information. FBI director Louis Freeh has officially warned that apocalyptic groups and right-wing extremists, whether domestic or international, might turn to violence to fulfill their prophecies of Armageddon as the year 2000 approaches. A document called "Project Megiddo" (taken from the term Armageddon, "Hill of Megiddo") was recently distributed to law enforcement agencies around the country, alerting them to the potential threats of such groups.¹³ Whatever combination of merriment, mayhem, madness, and marketing the arrival of the millennium brings, it is surely to be *the* story of 1999.

WHY COUNT TIME BY MILLENNIA?

The world millennium is of course from the Latin *mille*, simply meaning "a thousand" (the equivalent term in Greek is *chilias*, producing the term *chiliasm*). What few realize is that our very concept of marking time in one thousand year segments, and its resulting significance, is rooted in the final

chapters of Revelation, that mysterious final book of the Christian Bible. Indeed, we can trace the worldwide influence of this very Jewish notion to a single passage in the book: Rev 20:1-6. There the author describes a time when Satan, the Devil, is restrained and prevented from "deceiving the nations" of the world for a thousand years (he is bound with a great chain and thrown into a bottomless pit). This defeat of Satan is followed by a resurrection from the dead of those faithful to God, who "live and reign with the Messiah for one thousand years" (20:4). Following this thousand year rule Satan is briefly released for a final fling, just prior to the resurrection of all the remaining dead and the great and final judgment of both the living and the dead (20:11-15). This final thousand-year period is mentioned five times in these six verses.

This thousand-year period in the book of Revelation is not just any thousand-year period: it is the final one thousand years, followed by the resurrection of the dead and the last great judgment. And that is the point. If human history is to culminate in a final thousand-year period, does this not suggest a more general division of time into eras or periods of one thousand years? This is apparently the thinking that lies behind this text in the book of Revelation. We have no precise parallel to this final thousand-year period in apocalyptic Jewish sources prior to this time. What we do find, however, is the general notion of a specific period of bliss in which evil is conquered, death, disease, and suffering are no more, and the people of God are rewarded for their faithfulness (4 Ezra 6:25-28; 2 Baruch 73:1-7; Psalms of Solomon 17:21-32). In 4 Ezra (roughly contemporary with the book of Revelation) this "age of the Messiah" lasts four hundred years (7:26-30). 2 Enoch 33 has a seven thousand-year period, but followed by an "eighth day," of eternal rest. There is good reason to believe that the author of Revelation was tapping into a concept that had been developing for centuries among Jewish groups, and this general scheme of dividing history into millennial periods can be traced to Zoroastrian sources.¹⁴ What the early Christians do is take up this general ancient Jewish apocalyptic notion of a messianic "age of bliss" and decisively quantify it—hence the classic Western concept of the Millennium!

Simply put, it is the notion—first found in the Psalms, but given a decidedly apocalyptic cast in the New Testament—that "a day with the LORD is a thousand years and a thousand years is a day" (Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8-9). An analogy was then drawn between the six days of Creation in Gen 1:1-2:3 and the final seventh day, or Sabbath, upon which God rested from all his work. According to this view, human history would last precisely

six thousand years and be followed by a final seventh "day" or millennium: that is, a final thousand years, which, like the Sabbath day, would be characterized by peace and "rest" (the word *Shabbat* in Hebrew means to stop or halt). In this case the "rest" or "Sabbath" would mean a relief from the toil and domination of Satan's evil grasp upon the planet. Millenarianism refers specifically to this idea of a "millennial reign of the Messiah," but more generally to any utopian view of a transformed New Age, or New World Order.¹⁵

There is an important section in the Babylonian Talmud that seems to reflect some vestige of such a scheme of history. Rabbi Kattina taught:

Six thousand years shall the world exist, and one thousand, the seventh, it shall be desolate, as it is written, "And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." Just as the seventh year is one year of release in seven, so is the world: one thousand years out of seven shall be fallow (*b. Sanh. 97a*).

To which Rabbi Eliyahu replies:

The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation [no Torah]; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era, but through our many iniquities all these years have been lost (*b. Sanh. 97a*).

It is clear, from the apocalyptic nature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the John the Baptist movement, and the Jesus movement itself, with its proclamation that "the Kingdom of God is near," that some Jewish groups in and around the first century CE were expecting a messiah to appear.¹⁶ The Talmudic passage cited above looks back on such a hope and considers it somehow "postponed" in view of the Roman defeat of the Jews and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, and the disastrous Bar Kochba revolt in 135 CE.¹⁷ Obviously these rabbis did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. Yet the very same scheme, in the hands of the Christians, becomes a powerful concept, giving biblical history a chronological "logic" that would culminate in Jesus Christ.

The earliest succinct and systematic Christian exposition of this idea is found in the *Letter of Barnabas*, which dates to the late first or early second century CE. This document was highly treasured by many Christians and included as part of the Scriptures by some.¹⁸ The author writes:

He speaks of the Sabbath at the beginning of the Creation, "And God made in six days the works of his hands and on the seventh day he made an end, and rested in it and sanctified it." Notice

children, what is the meaning of "He made an end in six days"? He means this: that the Lord will make an end of everything in six thousand years, for a day with him means a thousand years. . . . So then, children, in six days, that is in six thousand years, everything will be completed. "And he rested on the seventh day." This means, when his Son comes he will destroy the time of the wicked one, and will judge the godless, and will change the sun and the moon and the stars, and then he will truly rest on the seventh day (*Barn. 25: 3-5*).

This notion becomes commonplace in the early church and is repeated by the earlier Church fathers.¹⁹ Indeed, Christians came to understand this as a primary meaning of the Sabbath day. Just as God created the physical world in six days and rested on the Sabbath, so he will create a new world of spiritual perfection over a seven thousand year period. There is no doubt that the book of Revelation reflects this precise notion, even though our text mentions only the terminal thousand-year period. The author clearly assumes that his audience is familiar with the idea as a whole and can easily fill in the blanks on its own.

This idea of six thousand years of human history was most compelling within Jewish and Christian apocalyptic circles. It strongly reinforces the general notion that history unfolds according to a divine plan and an ordered sequence, orchestrated by the will of God. But there is another, far more alluring, possibility—the possibility of calculation. After all, if one could determine precisely where one lived in this unfolding sequence of millennia, the idea of the "time of the end" drawing near would take on a much more concrete meaning. And this brings us back to the year 1999.

WHY IS THIS MILLENNIUM DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER MILLENNIA?

The millennium we are now leaving behind (the eleventh through the twentieth centuries CE), the second millennium as dated from the birth of Jesus, is the sixth based on a literal chronology of the Hebrew Bible:²⁰

Adam to Noah's Flood:	1656 years
Flood to birth of Jacob:	454 years
Abraham to Exodus:	430 years
Exodus to First Temple:	480 years
First Temple to Exile:	393 years
Exile to Second Temple:	72 years
Total:	3485 years

This takes us to the time of Haggai and Zechariah and the completion of the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem in 516/515 BCE (the sixth year of Darius [Ezra 6:13-15]). That works out to about 2515 years ago. If we add the numbers together—2515 years taking us back to the time of Darius and another 3485 years taking us back to Adam—you guessed it: we are sitting on the cusp of the 5999th year of world history as based on a literal reading of the traditional text of the Hebrew Bible. But the modern Jewish calendar has 1999 as the year 5760 rather than 5999. How can we account for this 240 year difference, since the rabbis also began their count with Adam and Eve? The answer is that the traditional Jewish calendar, based on the ancient rabbinic text called *Seder Olam Rabbah*, is rooted in rabbinic tradition and theology, not the literal numbers taken directly from the Hebrew Bible and correlated with historical research.²¹ The rabbis have 163 fewer years for the Persian period, with the result that rabbinic chronology dates the Babylonian Exile to 423 BCE.²² This is not a possible date, as we know with certainty that the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, when he destroyed Jerusalem and burned the Temple, was 587 or 586 BCE. The rabbis also calculate Israel's time in Egypt, based on Exod 12:40, differently than I have done above, resulting in an additional difference of 77 years in the two systems. Taken together, these add up to exactly 240 years!

It is worth noting that some Kabbalistic or mystical Jewish sources find significance in this twentieth century of the Christian era, even though they accept the year of the world as 5760 based on the standard Jewish calendar. The Zohar predicts that "in the year 600 of the sixth millennia [5600 on the Jewish calendar or the year 1840] the gates of wisdom from above and below will be opened to [begin] to rectify the world to prepare it to enter into the seventh millennium" (1.117A).²³ By this analogy of a thousand years as a day, the year 1999, although 240 years from the seventh millennium by the Jewish calendar, is just "hours" before arrival of the cosmic seventh millennium or Sabbath. Just as pious Jews prepare for the Sabbath each week several hours before sundown, the events of the late twentieth century (especially the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the Six Day War in 1967) can be seen by ardent Jewish fundamentalists as just such a Sabbath preparation—the "footsteps of the Messiah" as it were. By such a cosmic measure, 1999 would be equivalent to the Friday afternoon of human history, about five hours before sunset! Ironically, one mystical rabbi of the sixteenth century, Abraham Azulai (1570-1643), in contemplating such matters, actually came up with the precise year 5760 (1999 CE!) as having significance. He reasons that the measure of the world

is the same as the measure of the *mikvah* [ritual bath], or 40 seah. Since a "seah" is "144 eggs" (these are Talmudic measurements of volume), then 40 multiplied by 144 equals 5,760. Thus:

The length of days of this world shall be 5,760 years. Then shall the world be renewed. For as the mikvah purifies the unclean, at this time, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, will remove the unclean spirit from the world . . . but this is only the beginning of the redemption.²⁴

Who, we might well ask, would take such numbers literally? After all, has not the myth of Adam and Eve been shown to lack all historical validity? Homo Sapiens surely existed many hundreds of thousands of years ago, so that a mere six thousand is a blink of an eye against human and planetary evolution. Well, the answer is yes and no. First, there are millions of Creationists who do take these numbers as absolutes and believe the first human beings with a human soul can be traced back to a literal Adam and Eve around 4000 BCE. But beyond that, there are others, more sophisticated, but nonetheless biblically conservative, who fully accept the evolutionary timetable of millions of years for the development of life on this planet (interpreting the "days" of Genesis 1 as ages), but nonetheless see civilization (literate humans in Egypt, Sumer, and China) as dating back to approximately 4000 BCE. Thus one can still maintain that human history has about run its course, with God having allowed us six thousand years to wander outside the Gates of Eden.

Some have found cryptic hints of this six thousand year period elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. I mentioned above Ps 90:4, which speaks of a "day with the LORD as being a thousand years." There is also the statement in Gen 6:3, where Yahweh, grieved over the wickedness of human beings before the flood, appears to put a chronological cap on things: "My Spirit will not always strive with humans, their days shall be 120 years." What is the meaning of the 120 years? Does it refer to human life span? An ingenious apocalyptic reading has also been suggested. The reference to a year here has been understood as a "Great Year" or a jubilee year, not a calendar solar year. One hundred twenty multiplied by fifty such jubilee years equals six thousand years, the chronological *terminus ad quem* of permissible human wickedness. In other words, just as God sent the flood as a temporary check on evil, he has determined that human freedom to build its "Babylonian" society will be permitted only for a predetermined time.²⁵

What is particularly fascinating about the general chronological scheme of the Hebrew Bible (our Year 2000 equals 6000 years after Adam) is that it

does not have the slightest relationship to the birth of Jesus. All the numbers are taken from the Hebrew Bible, down to the return from Babylonian Exile, and then plugged into our modern historical and archaeological understanding of the Persian period (the sixth year of Darius equals 516/515 BCE). And yet, there is a fascinating correlation.

JESUS BORN "BEFORE CHRIST"?

My students are always puzzled when I try to explain to them that Jesus was likely born anywhere from 7 to 3 BCE; that is, several years before his "birth." This odd circumstance goes back to an error in calculation made by a sixth century CE scholar and monk, Dionysius Exiguus ("Dennis the Little").²⁶ In his time the years were dated from the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian (284 CE), who had actually persecuted the Christians. Dionysius believed that the calendar should be recalculated from the birth of Jesus. He concluded that the Roman year 754 AUC (the system used for centuries that numbered years from the founding of Rome) would be 1 AD, or Anno Domini ("year of the Lord"), the first year following Jesus' birth (since there is no year zero). Gradually this system of calculating years caught on, and the Emperor Charlemagne made it almost universal by the ninth century CE. One often hears that the turn of the first millennium, that is the year 999 CE, caused widespread apocalyptic foreboding that the end of the world was near. Although we can find some isolated examples of such expectations, this new calendar, with its altered way of counting years, was just coming into vogue.²⁷ We should not imagine that the illiterate peasant masses were focused on the number 999, and its magical click over to 1000, on the night of December 31st that year.

The Gregorian calendar we use today, adjusted slightly in 1582 by Pope Gregory and his scholars, maintains the calculations that Dionysius had determined for the birth of Jesus. Unfortunately, Dionysius was a few years off in his calculations. Scholars are convinced that Jesus was born several years earlier than the year we designate as 1 CE, most dating his birth around 7-5 BCE, and some later in 3 or 2 BCE.²⁸ The calculations turn on Matthew's reference to the birth of Jesus as occurring before the death of Herod the Great.²⁹ There is also the matter of the "Christmas Star," which Matthew says the Magi or astrologers from the east observed, prompting them to travel to Palestine (Matt 3). Johannes Kepler, in 1630, proposed that Matthew refers to several extraordinary conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn that took place in 7 BCE. More recently, Ernest Martin has argued that even more striking stellar events took place during the years 3

and 2 BCE, involving conjunctions of Jupiter and Venus (the "morning star") that were so spectacular they would have appeared in the sky as a single bright light, with Venus rising in the east.³⁰ The author of Revelation does refer to Jesus as "the bright morning star" (Rev 22:16). Martin's "Christmas Star" phenomenon has been accepted by many of the observatories in the world, including the Griffith in Los Angeles, for their annual Christmas programs.

What this means is that if we mark our millennia from the birth of Jesus, as we can now more accurately determine it, we already entered the new millennium some time between 1994 and 1998. It all depends on where we place the birth of Jesus in this range of possibilities from 7 BCE to 3 BCE. And yet, there is not the slightest chance that anyone is going to pay attention to such technicalities when the year 2000 conveys such symbolic meaning. For all practical purposes, give or take a year or two or three, the year 2000 marks the end of the second millennium since the birth of Jesus.

But from a wider perspective, we will, ironically, culminate approximately six thousand years of our great enterprising experiment we collectively call "human civilization." And it is the Hebrew Bible that most influentially chronicles this "changing of the guard" for our culture. Whether we will face an apocalyptic meltdown or just a mild "bump in the road," as we pass this milestone, is soon to be determined. At any rate, at this day, on this hour, I say to you all: "Welcome to the new era." May it herald for us a fulfillment of the central vision of the Hebrew prophets: a world of peace, prosperity, justice, and righteousness filling the earth as the waters cover the seas.

NOTES

¹John Updike, *Toward the End of Time* (London: Penguin, 1999).

²Robert Stone, *Damascus Gate* (London: Picador, 1999).

³Tom Wolfe, *A Man Full* (London: BBC Worldwide Limited, 1998).

⁴Stephen Jay Gould, *Questioning the Millennium: A Rationalist's Guide to a Precisely Arbitrary Countdown* (New York: Harmony Books, 2000); Damain Thompson, *The End of Time: Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium* (London: Minerva, 1997).

⁵Neale Donald Walsch, *Conversations with God. The Dominica Discourse* (ReCreation Foundation, 1997), Book 2, introduction.

⁶James Redfield, *The Celestine Prophecy: A Pocket Guide to the Nine Insights* (London: Bantam, 1996).

⁷Nostradamus was born in France in 1503. His major work, *Centuries*, a collection of obscurely phrased, rhymed quatrains written in French, was published in 1555. See John Hogue, *Nostradamus: The New Revelations* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1995), for a sample of recent interpretation applied to the approaching new millennium. For the original French text with translation and commentary, see Erike Cheetham, *The Further Prophecies of Nostradamus* (New York: Perigee Books, 1985), 424. The following translations are my own.

⁸Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Santa Ana: Vision House, 1974).

⁹Numerous resources, including papal statements regarding the Jubilee, may be found on the Internet on the Catholic Information Network, online: <http://www.cin.org/jp2/jubilee.html>.

¹⁰Yossi Melman, "Mossad, Shin Bet Bust Cult," *HaAretz* (January 4, 1999). Online: <http://www.haaretzdaily.com>.

¹¹Sari Bashi, "Israel Cult Members Deported," *Associated Press* (January 8, 1999).

¹²Dana Budeiri, "Police Say Tourists Are Members of Christian Cult," *Associated Press* (October 11, 1999).

¹³Patricia Wilson, "FBI Director Freeh Warns of Millennium Violence," *Reuters* (February 5, 1999); Paul Nowell, "FBI Warns of Possibility of Violence at Millennium's Dawn," *Associated Press* (November 3, 1999). The word Armageddon occurs in Rev 16:16 as a geographical reference to the place in northern Israel where the final apocalyptic battle takes place between all the world's armies. A summary of the report is found on the FBI Web site: online: <http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel99/militias.htm>.

¹⁴The notion of one thousand year periods can be traced to Zoroastrianism, which was very influential in the development of Jewish apocalypticism. See Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 77-104.

¹⁵On the general development of the Messianic ideas within late Second Temple Judaism, see John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); see also the comprehensive article "Messianism," in *The Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements* (ed. R. Landes; New York: Routledge, 2000), 245-251.

¹⁶See John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995); and Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

¹⁷For an overview, including archaeological discoveries and a general bibliography, see Yigael Yadin, *Bar-Kokhba* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971).

¹⁸It is included in the oldest complete New Testament manuscript, Codex Sinaiticus, now housed in the British Library in London. It was placed after the 27 books that now make up the canon.

¹⁹See Papias, the extravagant millenarist, as quoted in Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39:11-13; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 80-81; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 30-36; Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.24.

²⁰Although there are a number of ambiguities in the chronological system that runs through the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, these numbers are generally quite easy to come up with from a literal reading of the text: Gen 5, 11, 25, Exod 12:40, 1 Kgs 6:1; the reigns of the kings of Judah added together; and the exile and return from 2 Kgs 25 and Ezra. Both Josephus (a Jewish historian who wrote in the first century CE) and the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the scriptures) give very different numbers throughout.

²¹See Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, (rev. ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 107-11.

²²Apparently there is a theological reason the rabbis collapse their history and lose 240 years. They insist that there are only 490 years between the fall of the first and second Temples—which is plainly impossible by any outside historical evidence, but is the apparent assumption of the "70 weeks" prophecy of Dan 9:25-27. In order to make this prophecy come out correctly, stretching from the destruction of both the First and Second Temples, and even falling on the same precise day, the 9th of Ab, such an adjustment is necessary.

²³*The Zohar* (trans. H. Sperling and M. Simon; vol.1; London: Soncino, 1984), 364.

²⁴*Chesed l'Avraham* 2.59; see Pinchas Giller, *Reading the Zohar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 26-27.

²⁵See E.W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1990), 27; see also online: <http://bibleprophecy.net/6000.htm>.

²⁶See the discussion by Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 218-19.

²⁷See James Reston, *The Last Apocalypse: Europe at the Year 1000 A.D.* (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

²⁸The date of 3 or 2 BCE was universally held by the early Church fathers and has recently been embraced again by Ernest Martin, W. F. Filmer, and others, who place the death of Herod in 1 BCE. Their position has now been accepted by Finegan, *Handbook*, 291-301.

²⁹Finegan, *Handbook*, 291-97.

³⁰See a detailed discussion of all the proposals, including Martin's, in Finegan, *Handbook*, 306-20.