
A Study of



PREMILLENNIALISM

Gene Taylor

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An Introduction

Introduction

1. The doctrine of premillennialism is so prolific that it has affected the beliefs of nearly everyone the Christian tries to teach.
2. Premillennialism is a theory that is highly speculative and very dangerous to one's faith.
3. All need to have a basic understanding of premillennialism and the dangers it poses.

I. Why Study Premillennialism?

- A. Many Biblical principles must be denied for one to believe it.
 1. It perverts the prophetic nature of revelation.
 - "By the premillennial doctrine of prophecy being false, I have reference not just to their misinterpretation of certain prophecies but that their approach to prophecies of the kingdom embodies or necessarily implies false assumptions" (James D. Bales, "The Premillennial Doctrine of Prophecy Is False," *The Spiritual Sword*, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 16).
 2. The purpose of the church and the resurrection of Jesus are distorted.
- B. The widespread belief in it.
 1. Most fundamentalist groups believe in it (Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Billy Graham, etc.).
 2. Several decades ago it caused great turmoil within the church.
 - a. Its most influential proponent among brethren was R.H. Boll.
 - b. We must not think that it is a fight that will never be waged again for history has a way of repeating itself.
- C. It is a subtle form of infidelity.
 1. In that way it is like the theory of evolution.
 - a. It is only a theory.
 - b. It is unproven and unprovable.
 2. Some, even in the church, feel it makes no difference whether one believes it or not.

II. The Historical Background of Premillennialism

- A. Even though some individuals held various aspects of it earlier, the modern version originated with J.N. Darby, a preacher among the Plymouth Brethren in England in the early 1800's.
- B. W.E. Blackstone gave added influence to it.
 1. He was a Methodist preacher.
 2. His book, *Jesus Is Coming*, copyrighted in 1898, has now been printed in forty languages.
- C. C.I. Scofield and the *Scofield Reference Bible*.
 1. Scofield was a Congregationalist minister, lawyer, and a former U.S. Attorney for Kansas who developed the *Scofield Reference Bible*.

2. The *Scofield Bible* is not a translation but rather a special edition of the King James Version with hundreds of notes scattered throughout it.
 - a. In it, Scofield never argues, explains, apologizes or assigns any reasons for asserting what he writes is true.
 - b. It was, and continues to be very popular.
 - 1) When it was introduced, hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent to promote and advertise it.
 - 2) A basic reason for its popularity is that supporters of its views can say their doctrines are “in the Bible.”
 3. “From a position of entire ignorance of the Scriptures to the position of oracular religious certainty—especially respecting eschatological matters for some people— requires from three to six months with a Scofield Bible” (T.T. Shields, *The Gospel Witness*, April 7, 1932).
- D. Prominent proponents of premillennialism.
1. William Miller.
 - a. In the middle 1800’s, his teachings were basic to the formulation of the doctrines of the Seventh Day Adventists and the Jehovah’s Witnesses.
 - b. He predicted the second coming of Jesus for 1843, 1844 and 1845, then went into oblivion.
 2. Ellen G. White: founder of the Seventh Day Adventists.
 3. Charles Taze Russell: founder of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.
 4. Joseph Smith.
 - a. He was founder and latter-day “prophet” of the Mormon Church.
 - b. He was strongly influenced by the leaders of premillennial teaching.
 5. Hal Lindsey: author of *The Late, Great Planet Earth*.
 6. Other prominent proponents include Charles Ryrie, John F. Walvoord, Martin R. DeHaan, Garner Ted Armstrong, Edger C. Whisenant and Billy Graham.

III. Premillennialism Defined

- A. Terminology.
 1. Millennium: one thousand years.
 2. Pre: before.
 3. Ism: dogma.
- B. Millennialists can be divided into three groups.
 1. Amillennialism.
 - This is “...the belief that Christ is now reigning over his kingdom, which is the church, and therefore there is no need or promise of an earthly visible reign” (J.D. Tant, *Gospel Guardian*, Vol. 12-14, p. 6).
 2. Postmillennialism.
 - This “holds that the literal return of Christ will occur after the millenium” (J.W. Roberts, *The Revelation of John*, p. 17).
 3. Premillennialism.
 - This “...is a view of last things which insists that the millennial passage in Revelation twenty must be interpreted literally and the Second Coming of Christ will inaugurate His reign as King in person on the earth. There

are two phases involved in His Coming: the first is called the 'rapture,' when Christ comes for His bride, the church, and the second is called the 'revelation,' at which time Christ returns with His bride to the earth. At that glorious appearing, He subdues the antichrist and establishes his reign over the earth during the millenium. At the close of the millenium, there will be a brief but fierce rebellion led by Satan, which is quickly quelled, and which is followed by the bodily resurrection of the wicked and the final White Throne Judgment" (William M. Arnett, *Basic Christian Doctrines*, pp. 280-281).

C. Premillennialism is based on a misapplication of Revelation 20:1-7.

D. A summary of premillennialism.

1. The kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament has not yet come.
2. Because the Jews rejected Jesus, that kingdom was postponed.
3. As a consequence of this, Jesus set aside the divine plan and gave us the church instead.
4. Jesus now has the right to be king but is not a king in fact. He is a "crown prince" on His Father's throne.
5. The kings of Daniel 2:44 must be restored so that the kingdom might be set up.
6. The Jews will reoccupy Palestine and be converted. The temple is to be rebuilt.
7. Jesus will then leave heaven.
8. The saints will be resurrected and along with those living will meet the Lord in the air. The wicked will not be raised at this time. (C.T. Russell called this period the "Rapture." R.H. Boll called it the "first stage of the second coming.")
9. During this time, on the earth, is a period of great tribulation.
10. After this, the Lord comes on the earth with His saints and the millennial reign begins. All of this is "imminent."
11. After 1000 years, Satan will muster his forces for a mighty battle. He and his forces will be defeated in this literal battle.
12. The wicked then go to hell and the righteous to heaven. Eternity begins.

Conclusion

Premillennialism is a theory—a false and dangerous theory. We must be on guard against it and those who teach it.

Has the Kingdom Prophesied by Old Testament Writers Been Established?

Introduction

1. Premillennialists believe that because the Jews rejected Jesus the kingdom of prophecy was postponed. This is often referred to as the “rejection theory.”
2. Is this view of the rejection of Jesus valid and did God postpone the kingdom of prophecy?

I. Statements by Premillennialists on the Rejection Theory

- A. “The kingdom announced as ‘at hand’ (Matt. 4.17, note) by John the Baptist, by the King, and by the Twelve, was rejected by the Jews, first morally (Mt. 11.20, note), and afterward officially (Mt. 21.42,43), and the King, crowned with thorns, was crucified...Afterward He announced His purpose to ‘build’ His church.” (C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1226)
- B. “This kingdom was at hand, that is, it came nigh, when Jesus, the King, came. So much so, that the three favored disciples witnessed a foretaste of its glory and power on the Mount of Transfiguration. But the Jews rejected it and slew their king. They were not willing to have this man reign over them, and therefore the Kingdom did not ‘immediately appear.’” (W.E. Blackstone, *Jesus Is Coming*, p. 83)
- C. “This we believe is the true explanation of the subject. The Kingdom did come ‘nigh’ when Christ came, and had they received Him, it would have been manifested, but now it is in abeyance, or waiting until He comes again.” (Blackstone, p. 88)
- D. “The Kingdom which Christ faithfully offered while on earth was the very same earthly, Messianic, Davidic kingdom which the Jews expected from the Old Testament prophecies. But it is a matter of history that such a Kingdom was not ushered in at the first advent of Christ.” (Charles Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, p. 93)
- E. “Certainly the kingdom was not set up when Christ was on earth. Instead, it was rejected.” (Ryrie, p. 95)
- F. “...the kingdom of heaven is the reign of heaven’s King on earth. This Jesus offered to the nation of Israel when he came the first time, but they rejected it and he went to the cross.” (Martin R. DeHaan, *The Second Coming of Jesus*, p. 98)
- G. “It can be said at once that His dying was not God’s own plan. It was conceived somewhere else and yielded to by God. God has a plan of atonement by which men who were willing could be saved from sin and its effect. That plan is given in the Old Hebrew code. To the tabernacle or temple, under prescribed regulation, a man could bring some animal which he owned. The man brought that which was his own. It represented him.” (S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks About Jesus*, p. 11)

II. The Rejection of Jesus as Presented in Scripture

- A. God allowed His Son to come to earth in order to be rejected and crucified (John 12:23-33).

B. Prophecies of the rejection of Jesus.

1. Isaiah 53.
 - a. The entire chapter tells how the Christ must suffer and be rejected by His people.
 - b. Jesus applied this prophecy to Himself in John 12:37-38).
 - c. This prophecy is also applied to Jesus by:
 - 1) Paul (Romans 10:16).
 - 2) Matthew (Matthew 8:17).
 - 3) Peter (1 Peter 2:22).
 - 4) Luke (Luke 22:37).
 - 5) Philip (Acts 8:32-38).
2. Psalm 118:22.
 - a. The stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner.
 - b. Jesus applied this prophecy to Himself in Matthew 21:33-46.
3. Consider the application made in the following verses of prophetic messages of the Old Testament.
 - a. Luke 18:31. All things that were written of Jesus were accomplished.
 - b. Luke 24:44-46. All things were fulfilled which were written in the prophets including that the Christ must suffer and rise from the dead the third day.
 - c. Acts 2:23. Jesus was “delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” to be crucified.
 - d. 1 Corinthians 15:3. “Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”
 - e. Acts 3:24. “All the prophets...foretold these days.”

C. God foreknew the Christ would be rejected (Job 42:2).

1. He sent His Son in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4).
2. If the Jews were able to foil Jesus, what makes anyone think they would not be able to do it again?
3. How foolish it is to think that men could change the eternal purpose of God!

D. If the Jews had accepted Jesus, there would have been no:

1. Crucifixion and no blood shed (Hebrews 10:4).
2. Remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22).
3. Church purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28).
4. Death, burial and resurrection, thus no gospel. Without the gospel, man would be helpless and hopeless (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16-17).

III. Is the Church a Substitute for the Prophesied Kingdom?

A. Premillennialists suggest the church is only a “Spiritual contingent,” a “vestibule,” etc.

- “The dispute whether or not the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy was ‘offered’ to Israel by John the Baptist and by Christ in his earthly ministry, is but a war of words, irrelevant and unnecessary. The only thing that ever stood between Israel and her glorious promise, kingdom and all, was her sinful condition. That removed, every other promise must necessarily be fulfilled to them, and that—speedily. Whether there had been any formal offer of the kingdom made to them, and upon their rejection of it the same was withdrawn

and postponed, is no essential matter. But if salvation was offered to the nation by Jesus, all else was implied therein as a matter of course; and if that was nationally rejected, the fulfillment of all their prophetic hopes was thereby made impossible and automatically deferred until the time when the nation would turn to acknowledge Jesus Christ and be forgiven" (R.H. Boll, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 46).

- B. Some applicable Scriptures.
 - 1. Ephesians 2:19-22. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and *prophets*.
 - 2. Ephesians 3:1-12. The church is part of God's eternal purpose.
- C. If, as most premillennialists state, this is only the "church age" and the "kingdom age" is to follow, consider some of the difficulties of such a view.
 - 1. How long are we to glorify God in the church? (Eph. 3:21).
 - 2. Are we really living in the "last days?" (Heb. 1:1-2).
 - 3. Does God have a better earthly age in store for us? (Acts 3:19-26).
- D. The church is not a monument to the power of wicked man. Rather, it stands as testimony to the manifold wisdom of God.

IV. The Kingdom of Prophecy Has Been Established

- A. Premillennialists deny that it is. (R.H. Boll, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 46)
- B. Some prophecies of the kingdom and their fulfillment.
 - 1. The kingdom of Isaiah 2:2-4.
 - 2. The kingdom of Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45.
 - 3. Were these prophets right or wrong?
 - a. Were they men of integrity?
 - b. Did they speak by inspiration?
 - c. If they were wrong, what happens to my faith in the rest of the Bible?
- C. The word of God affirms that the kingdom is now in existence (Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28).

Conclusion

- 1. The church stands today as a memorial to God's power, wisdom, love and concern for dying, sinful man (Ephesians 3:10).
- 2. The kingdom was established at the very time the prophets foretold.
- 3. Every person should resolve to enter the kingdom and live faithfully in it.

The Kingship of Jesus

Introduction

1. Any study of premillennialism must necessarily include a study of the Kingship of Jesus as to His place in prophecy and His relation to the church.
2. This lesson will examine Jesus as King by looking to the following areas:
 - a. Is He King now?
 - b. The confirmation of His present rule by prophecy.
 - c. The throne upon which He sits.

I. Is Jesus Christ King Now?

- A. Premillennialists assert that Jesus is king by right but not king in fact.
 1. They draw a parallel between David being anointed king before he became king in fact.
 - a. To them, such is the same with Jesus.
 - b. Note: David never performed the function of his kingly office *in his name* until he was king.
 2. When Jesus administered the functions of kingship in His own name, He was then king in fact.
 - a. Preaching was to be done “in His name” (Luke 24:47).
 - b. The first time “repentance and remission of sins” was preached in His name (Acts 2:14-40), He had been raised, had ascended back to the Father and had been crowned (Acts 2:32-36).
 - c. All that is done *now* is to be done in His name (Colossians 3:17).
- B. The Kingship of Jesus is a reality *now*.
 1. He came to earth to be crowned king (John 18:37).
 2. He met all the qualifications necessary to be crowned King.
 - a. Territory (Daniel 7:13-14; Philippians 2:9-11).
 - b. Subjects (Colossians 1:20; John 18:36).
 - c. He overcame His foe (Revelation 3:21).
 - 1) He bound the strong man so He could have power over His domain (Matthew 12:29).
 - 2) He bound Satan (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8).
 - 3) Satan could not prevent the establishment of Christ’s kingdom (Matthew 16:18; Revelation 1:18).
 3. He ascended to the throne.
 - a. When He ascended, a cloud received Him out of sight (Acts 1:9) and He was brought to “the Ancient of Days” and was given a kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14).
 - b. He was raised from the dead to rule on His throne until the end of time (Acts 2:29-34; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28).
 - c. He is sitting at the right hand of the Father until the end (1 Corinthians 15:24; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 10:12-13).

4. His name (Lord - Jesus - Christ) is proof of the position He holds.
 - a. Lord (Acts 2:36): Master, Ruler.
 - b. Jesus (Matthew 1:21): Savior.
 - c. Christ: Anointed.
 - d. A summary: The Son of God died on the cross to become our Savior. He ascended back to heaven where He was anointed our ruler, our King.
5. Denying His present Kingship presents numerous difficulties.
 - a. Since He is now acting as King (Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 3:6), is He a usurper?
 - b. Since the kingdom has been established, is it without a king?
 - c. All would still be under the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13).

II. The Present Rule of Jesus Is Confirmed by Fulfilled Prophecies

- A. Psalm 110:1-14 which is applied to Jesus in Acts 2:34-35. He was prophesied to:
 1. Sit at God's right hand (v. 1; Hebrews 1:3).
 2. Rule in the midst of enemies (v. 2; Hebrews 1:8-9, 13).
 3. Rule over willing subjects (v. 3; Revelation 22:17).
 4. Be a priest after the order of Melchizedek (v. 4; Hebrews 6:20).
- B. Zechariah 6:12-13 which is applied to Jesus in Isaiah 11:1,10 and Romans 15:12. He was prophesied to:
 1. Build a temple (v. 12; Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Peter 2:4-9).
 2. Sit on His throne (v. 13; Acts 2:34-35).
 3. Rule on His throne (v. 13; Hebrews 1:8; Matthew 28:18).
 4. Be a priest while He sits and rules (v. 13; Hebrews 4:14; 6:20; 8:1, 4).

III. The Throne Upon Which Jesus Sits

- A. The throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33).
 1. Premillennialists would make it a literal, material throne (in an earthly kingdom).
 2. The fact that He is to reign upon the throne of David makes it impossible for Him to rule on a literal, earthly throne.
 - a. As the seed of Jeconiah (abbr. Coniah) legally through Joseph (Matt. 1:12,16) and physically through Mary (via Shealtiel - Luke 3:27), according to Jeremiah 22:24-30, Christ would never reign on David's throne on earth and prosper.
 - b. It is not a literal throne, therefore, but a heavenly or spiritual one.
- B. What is meant by "throne of David?"
 1. Exercising rule by divine appointment, by God's decree.
 2. The example of Solomon.
 - a. He sat on David's throne and his own (1 Kings 1:46-48; 2:12).
 - b. He sat on the Lord's throne (1 Chronicles 29:23).
 3. As David ruled over physical Israel by divine right, Jesus now rules over spiritual Israel by divine right.
- C. His priesthood shows His throne to be heavenly, not earthly.
 1. A syllogism based on Zechariah 6:13 and Hebrews 4:14.
 - a. He is a priest on His throne.
 - b. He is a priest in heaven.
 - c. Therefore, His throne is in heaven.

2. A syllogism based on Hebrews 8:4.
 - a. He could not be a priest if He were on earth.
 - b. He is a priest on His throne.
 - c. Therefore, His throne is in heaven.
3. Being a “priest forever” (Psalm 110:4), means He will never be on earth again (Hebrews 8:4).
 - a. He will not be made flesh a second time (2 Corinthians 5:16).
 - b. His kingdom is “not of this world” (John 18:36).

Conclusion

1. Christ, having all authority (Matt. 28:18), is now ruling in heaven over those who have submitted to His will, been added to the church and granted entrance into His kingdom.
2. He will never assume a literal throne here on earth.

The Fulfillment of the Land Promise and the Restoration of the Jews to that Land

Introduction

1. The theory of premillennialism demands the restoration of the Jews to Palestine and the reconstruction of the Jewish system.
2. Therefore, this lesson will answer the following questions:
 - a. Has the land promise made to Abraham been fulfilled?
 - b. Will the Jews and their system be restored?

I. The Promise to Abraham and Its Fulfillment

- A. Premillennialists teach that the land promise made to Abraham has not been fulfilled.
 1. "The unconditional character of the Abrahamic covenant is the crucial issue in making the Abrahamic covenant a basis for premillennialism. If the covenant is unconditional, then the national aspect of it must yet be fulfilled, and premillennialism is the only system of interpretation which makes a place for a national future for Israel in which she possesses her land" (Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, p. 52).
 2. "Since the covenant has never been fulfilled in history, if language means anything at all, it must have a future fulfillment" (Ryrie, p. 60).
 3. Whether or not the land promise has been fulfilled is a very important matter.
 - a. If the land promise is not fulfilled:
 - 1) The Old Testament prophecies are false.
 - 2) The prophets are not reliable.
 - 3) *Or* the prophecies are yet to be fulfilled.
 - 4) The Jews can put confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3) and God respects the Jews above all others (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34-35).
 - b. If the land promise has already been fulfilled:
 - 1) The prophecies are true.
 - 2) The prophets are worthy and reliable.
 - 3) Both Jew and Gentile are equal in Christ (Gal. 3:27-29).
 - 4) We need not look for a future fulfillment.
- B. The three-fold promise to Abraham is found in Genesis 12:1-7.
 1. The land promise (v. 7).
 - a. The extent of the land given (Genesis 15:18-21).
 - b. Receiving it was unconditional.
 - c. It was completely fulfilled (Joshua 21:43-45; 23:14-15).
 - 1) The cities of refuge (Deuteronomy 19:7-10; Joshua 20:1-9).
 - 2) The territory of Solomon's rule is described as being exactly what was promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18 (1 Kings 4:21).
 - d. Retaining the land was conditional (Deuteronomy 6:10-15; 8:19-20; 28:58-64; Joshua 23:15-16).

2. The nation promise (v. 2).
 - a. From the seventy people who went to Egypt, 430 years later a nation came out.
 - b. Solomon reigned over the land and the nation (1 Kings 4:20-21).
 - c. The nation was great, its fame spread abroad (1 Kings 10:1-7).
 3. The seed promise (v. 3).
 - a. "All families" (nations) being blessed had reference to the heathen obeying the gospel (Galatians 3:8).
 - b. The "Seed" that was to bless the world was Jesus (Galatians 3:16).
- C. The land and nation phases of the promise were simply physical aspects necessary to fulfilling the spiritual part of the promise.
1. To deny that the land was given to Abraham's descendants is to deny that the seed promise was fulfilled by God.
 2. Not one land promise made to Israel has not been fulfilled.
 - a. There is no reason to look for fulfillment of prophecies already fulfilled.
 - b. The premillennialist's hope is an empty one.

II. Will Palestine Be Given Back to Israel and Will the Jewish Order Be Restored?

- A. Premillennialists believe that the Jews will be restored to Palestine and that the Jewish system will be established once again.
1. "The one event which many Bible students in the past overlooked was this paramount sign: Israel had to be a nation again in the land of the forefathers. Israel a nation—a dream for so many years, made a reality on May 14, 1948 when David Ben-Gurion read the Declaration of Independence announcing the establishment of a Jewish nation to be known as the State of Israel" (Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 43).
 2. "Israel's restoration to the land is just as plainly and abundantly taught as the dispersion from the land. One is a fact of history, the other a fact of prophecy" (Charles M. Neal, *Looking Into the Dark*, p. 56).
- B. Restoration prophecies.
1. A historical summary.
 - a. At Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided into Israel and Judah (1 Kings 12).
 - 1) Israel continued as a separate nation until 721 B.C.
 - 2) Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C.
 - b. God, foreseeing the captivity of His people, prophesied concerning Judah's return from Babylonian captivity to the land possessed by their fathers (Isaiah 1:5-9; 10:20-23; Jeremiah 30:3).
 2. Every one of the restoration prophecies were spoken before, during or during the period of return from the exile in Babylon.
 - a. God named the king who would assist the Jews in the restoration of the temple, the city of Jerusalem and the people back to their land—Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28).
 - b. As spoken in these prophecies, the remnant returned.
 - 1) The first group under Zerubbabel in 536 B.C.
 - 2) The second group under Ezra in 486 B.C.

3. There is not a single New Testament prophecy of national Israel's restoration.
 - a. The promise to Abraham concerning the land and the nation was fulfilled.
 - b. The promise to bring back a remnant to possess the land after captivity was fulfilled.
- C. God has nothing more for the Jews except that which is in Christ through the gospel (Romans 11:16-27).
- D. Some difficulties of the restoration theory.
 1. The apostle Paul's preaching brought the wrong reaction from the Jews (Acts 26:1-7; 28:16-20).
 - a. Israel, when Paul preached, was looking for an earthly Messiah, hoping for an earthly kingdom which was, in their minds, the hope of Israel.
 - b. Paul preached the real hope of Israel.
 - 1) It was not what the Jews wanted to hear.
 - 2) It antagonized them and caused them to persecute him.
 2. Racial and national boundaries are removed in Christ (Galatians 3:26-29).
 - a. Consider Romans 2:28-29; Romans 4:13-17; and Galatians 6:15-16.
 - b. For national Israel to be restored, the gospel, Jesus, His work, and the church—everything precious to Christians—would have to be removed.
 3. Jerusalem has been removed as a specific locale for worship (John 4:19-24).
 4. The allegory of two women (Galatians 4:21-31).
 - a. National Israel cannot inherit with spiritual Israel.
 - b. If fleshly Israel is to be in the millennium, spiritual Israel cannot be, and vice versa, because they cannot inherit together.

Conclusion

1. The land promise has been fulfilled.
2. All prophecies of the restoration of Israel to the land have been fulfilled.
3. If the Jews, and all others, want hope today, they must look to the New Testament order and the present kingdom of Jesus Christ not to the false teaching of premillennialism.

The Conversion of Israel

Introduction

1. Premillennialism's sequence of events.
 - a. Jesus will come a second time.
 - b. The dead saints will be raised.
 - c. The dead saints, along with living saints, will be caught up for a period of "rapture" with the Lord in the air.
 - d. During the "rapture" period, there will be a time of "great tribulation" on the earth.
 - e. The Lord will come back to earth with the saints, the Jews will be transported back to Palestine.
 - f. All the Jews will be converted.
2. Premillennialists teach that all Jews will be saved.
 - a. "Will 'all Israel' be saved? Yes, the entire nation then living. They will be greatly reduced, and refined through the fires of the Great Tribulation through which they shall have passed (Zech. 13:9) and the Lord will have purged all the rebels out from among them. (Ezek. 20:37-38). The remnant of Israel shall be a holy people, forgiven, regenerated, converted, cleansed. (Rom. 11:26)" (R.H. Boll, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 81).
 - b. "The Scriptures bear testimony to the fact that Israel as a nation is to be saved from her sin and delivered from her enemies by the Messiah when he shall return to the earth...Jehovah will, in connection with the second advent of Christ and as a part of Israel's salvation, 'take away their sins.' This, Jehovah declares, is His covenant with them (Rom. 11:27)...In Hebrews 10:4 it is stated that it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should 'take away' sin, and in Romans 11:27 it is promised that Israel's sins will yet be taken away...The induction to be drawn from these and other portions of Scripture is that Jehovah will yet in the future, in the briefest portion of time, and as a part of Israel's salvation, take away their sins" (Lewis Sperry Chafter, founder of the Dallas Theological Seminary, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, pp.105-107).

I. Are the Jews Still the Chosen People of God??

- A. Premillennialists believe that the Jews still receive special consideration from God.
 1. "God has raised up America in these last days for the cause of world evangelism and for the protection of His people, the Jews. I don't think America has any other right or reason for existence than those two purposes" (Jerry Falwell, as quoted in "Premillennialism," *The Wendell Ave. Bulletin*, Vol. XIX, No. 22, May 30, 1982).
 2. "There is something going on in Israel. It is of eternal consequence, and the spiritual significance of that something leaps in my blood like a flame. God's ancient people are carving out an empire...That's what the Bible told us they would do. The meaning of it in terms of a coming great world revival and the Second Coming of Christ has thrilled me to the very fiber and core of my being" (Oral Roberts, *The Drama of the End Time*).

- B. The contention that the Jews are yet God’s chosen people and that He yet has in store for them special blessings not obtainable by other people is in direct contradiction to God’s whole plan of salvation through Christ.
 - 1. Christ died for all—no distinction is given to any because of his/her nationality (2 Corinthians 5:14-16).
 - a. No one thinks of Jesus solely as a Jew with the narrow, nationalistic traits characteristic of His day.
 - b. Christ is considered Savior of all mankind.
 - c. Being an heir of the promise is not dependent on flesh (Galatians 3:26-29).
 - 2. Passages to consider.
 - a. The parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matthew 21:33-45).
 - b. The “circumcision” today are believers sanctified by Christ (Phil. 3:1-9).
 - c. Being an heir of the promise is not dependent on flesh (Gal. 3:26-29).
- C. The conversion of the Jews must come within the scope of the great commission.
 - 1. It is for all people (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Mark 16:15-16).
 - 2. There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile (Acts 15:7-9; 10:34-35), therefore, both will be saved in the same way.
 - 3. We are living in the “last days” (Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 2:14-21).
 - a. To save all the Jews as a nation would require another covenant.
 - b. Such would show the gospel to have fault (Hebrews 8:6-8).
 - c. Consider what God says of His covenant through His Son (James 1:25; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Galatians 1:8-9).
- D. Those Jews who rejected Jesus in the first century were deemed “unworthy of eternal life” (Acts 13:46).
 - 1. Therefore, those who reject Jesus and His gospel today would also be judged unworthy.
 - 2. No special provisions will be made for them.
 - a. Just being a Jew, a fleshly descendant of Abraham, was no longer enough to make one a part of God’s chosen people, the elect.
 - b. One, whether Jew or Gentile, must look to Christ and His gospel.

II. An Analysis of Romans 11:26—The Premillennialist’s Proof-Text Prophecies

- A. The general theme of chapters ten and eleven of Romans is the conversion of Israel.
 - 1. It is not their restoration as a nation.
 - 2. Their conversion must come within the scope of the new covenant.
- B. The salvation of Israel, that which Paul desired (ch. 10:1-3), can only come through “the word of faith which we preach” (Romans 10:8).
 - 1. Israel is no exception to the gospel plan of salvation.
 - 2. Israel’s only hope is the gospel.
- C. In chapter 11, some Jews, at that time, had accepted the gospel and been granted salvation.
 - 1. They are referred to as the “remnant” (v. 5).
 - 2. God had not cast Israel away but what once had been a fleshly kingdom is now a spiritual one.
 - a. Just being a Jew, a fleshly descendant of Abraham, was no longer enough to make one a part of God’s chosen people, the elect.
 - b. One, whether Jew or Gentile, must look to Christ and His gospel.

- D. Except for the “remnant,” Israel had hardened their hearts and rejected Christ and the gospel.
1. With such in mind, chapter 11:25 states, “a hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”
 - a. “Hardness in part” implies that later the hardening would be complete.
 - b. “Fullness of the Gentiles” means conversion of the Gentiles.
 2. Until the Gentiles were converted (the gospel was preached for ten years to Jews only), the hardness of Israel was in part but with the acceptance of the gospel by the Gentiles, Israel’s hardness became complete.
- E. “So all Israel shall be saved” (v. 26).
1. “So” is an adverb of manner.
 2. Israel can be saved in the same manner as the “remnant” was—by accepting the new covenant.
 3. Only in this way can Israel be saved.
 - a. This statement is not a declaration of universal salvation for the Jews or the national restoration of Israel.
 - b. It is a statement of conditions upon which the Jew would be saved—the same conditions which apply to the Gentiles and those who made up the “remnant.”

Conclusion

1. The gospel is the only place where one can find salvation whether he is Jew or Gentile.
2. No person, or people, is above obedience to the gospel.
3. Jews, as all others, will only be saved if they hearken “to the faith” preached by Paul and the other apostles.

The Rapture

Introduction

1. The “rapture” is part of the premillennial theory that pertains to the premillennialist’s view of the second coming of Christ.
2. Jim McQuiggan gives a good summary of the premillennial view of the second coming of Christ in his book *The Kingdom of God and the Planet Earth*: “Christ is to return for the church, resurrect the dead members and judge the whole church. He goes away and comes back again in seven years to resurrect the righteous dead of pre-Christian times and those who died during the Tribulation. He then judges those righteous and lets them enter the Millenium. At the same time he judges the living ungodly and slays them. After the Millenium he resurrects all of the ungodly of all ages (along with the righteous dead of the Millenium) and judges them” (p. 138).
3. This lesson will:
 - a. Show what premillennialists teach about the rapture.
 - b. Analyze 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 as to what it does and does not teach since it used by premillennialists to support and sustain their “rapture” doctrine.

I. What Premillennialists Teach About the Rapture

A. A summary of the rapture.

1. The Lord will one day appear “secretly” to His saints and “silently” take them from the earth to be with Him for seven years.
 - a. “A few years ago, David Copperfield astounded a national television audience by making the Statue of Liberty ‘disappear.’ Those who watched the spectacle on TV confessed bewilderment and amazement at such a grand illusion. All the while, the audience knew, and Copperfield himself agreed, it was all just a trick. The Lady never left her pedestal.
“How that illusion by this master magician pales in comparison with what will occur when Jesus Christ appears to end this age and usher in the day of the Lord! No mirrors, no stage hands, and no trickery will be needed when the Savior reaches out His arms and makes millions of people—both living and dead—disappear from the earth” (Martin R. DeHaan II, *What Can We Know About the Second Coming?*, p. 18).
 - b. “There I was, driving down the freeway and all of a sudden the place went crazy...cars going in all directions...and not one of them had a driver. I mean it was wild! I think we’ve got an invasion from outer space!
“It was the last quarter of the championship game and the other side was ahead. Our boys had the ball. We made a touchdown and tied it up. The crowd went crazy. Only one minute to go and they fumbled—our quarterback recovered—he was about a yard from the goal when—zap—no more quarterback—completely gone, just like that!

“It was puzzling — very puzzling. I was teaching my course in the Philosophy of Religion when all of a sudden three of my students vanished. They simply vanished! They were quite argumentative—always trying to prove their point from the Bible. No great loss to the class. However, I do find this disappearance very difficult to explain” (Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 136).

2. Its purpose: To spare the church from the “Great Tribulation.”
 3. It is to occur during the final seven year countdown of this age (the church age).
 4. During the tribulation, there will be both great evangelistic work and intense persecution.
 5. At the end of the rapture, Jesus will:
 - a. Return to destroy the antichrist.
 - b. Sit on a literal throne in Jerusalem.
 - c. Reign over the earth for 1000 years.
- B. An immediate problem with the premillennialists’ teaching on the rapture.
1. This doctrine is not found in the Bible.
 2. The word “rapture” is not found in the Bible.
 - a. It is from the Latin word that means “to carry off by force.”
 - b. A defense of its Biblical omission: “OBJECTION: The Rapture Is Not in Scripture. If we are to consider ourselves people who ‘go by the Book,’ we have to be careful that we never support an argument by adding to the Bible something that isn’t there. One of those ‘somethings’ that isn’t found in God’s Word is the word ‘rapture.’
“When we use this word to designate the time of Jesus’ return in the air to take His followers to heaven, though, we are not violating Scripture. For example, the word ‘Trinity’ doesn’t appear in the Bible, but posttribulationists don’t deny its truth.
“Where, then does the term ‘rapture’ come from? In I Thessalonians 4:17, Paul said that living believers will be ‘caught up’ with the dead in Christ to meet the Lord in the air. The Greek word Paul used here is ‘harpazo,’ which means ‘to snatch away.’ When the Bible was translated into Latin, the scholars rendered ‘harpazo’ as ‘rapturo’. It is just a short step then from ‘rapturo’ to the English word ‘rapture.’ Therefore, although it is true that the word itself does not appear in our English translation of Scripture, the sense of the word is surely there. Christians will be snatched away when the Lord descends with a shout” (DeHaan, pp. 16-17).
 3. The text used by premillennialists to support their view, 1 Thessalonians 4, actually refutes it.

II. An Analysis of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- A. The main point of the text: The dead in Christ are not to be sorrowed after like those who have no hope (v. 13).
1. Some believed that one who died before Christ came would miss the benefits and blessings of His coming.

2. This passage lays such a fear to rest:
 - a. By showing that the righteous dead will rise first before the righteous living to meet the Lord.
 - b. Not by contrasting the righteous dead and the wicked dead.
- B. What will happen when the Lord comes.
 1. "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout" (v. 16).
 - a. There is to be nothing secret or silent about it.
 - b. "Every eye will see Him" (Revelation 1:7).
 2. "And the dead in Christ will rise first" (v. 16).
 - a. It does not teach two resurrections, one of saints and 1000 years later one of the wicked.
 - b. The contrast in the text is:
 - 1) Not between the righteous dead and the wicked dead.
 - 2) Between the dead in Christ and the living in Christ.
 - c. The passage does not discuss the wicked dead or their resurrection.
 - d. The New Testament teaches only one resurrection (John 5:28-29).
 - 1) One resurrection, two destinations.
 - 2) The wicked dead and the righteous dead will be raised at the same time.
 3. "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (v. 17).
 - a. The dead shall be raised incorruptible and the living shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15:52).
 - b. Will they be changed back in seven years?
 4. "And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (v. 17).
 - a. Does it sound like the righteous will be with the Lord for seven years then come back to earth for 1000 years?
 - b. The Bible speaks of the second coming of Jesus as the end of the earthly order (1 Corinthians 15:23-24).
 - c. The resurrection is described as "the last day" (John 6:40).
 5. When Jesus returns:
 - a. All nations will be gathered unto Him for the final judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).
 - b. Everything about this earth will be burned up (2 Peter 3:9-13).
 - c. A new spiritual, eternal order will be introduced (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:11-15).

Conclusion

1. The theory of a "rapture" is a product of the imagination of men. It cannot be found in the Bible.
2. Both good and evil are to be raised in the very same hour.
3. Twisting must be done to make the Bible fit this premillennial fantasy.

Armageddon

Introduction

1. Premillennialists view Armageddon as a final conflict prior to Christ setting up a literal kingdom upon earth for one thousand (1000) years.
2. Revelation 16:16 is their proof-text for a future physical battle.
3. Along with the above passage from Revelation, premillennialists piece together passages (taken out of context—GT) and build a highly speculative theory(ies) about this battle.
 - a. “With the United Arab and African armies neutralized by the Russian invasion, and the consequent complete annihilation of the Russian forces and their homeland, we have only two great spheres of power left to fight the final climactic battle of Armageddon: the combined forces of the Western civilization united under the leadership of the Roman Dictator and the vast hordes of the Orient probably united under the Red Chinese war machine” (Hal Lindsey, “The Greatest Battle of All Time,” *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 162).
 - b. “Topping even these disasters will come a world war of unprecedented proportions. Hundreds of millions of men will be involved in a gigantic world power struggle centered in the Middle East. The area will become the scene of the greatest war of history. Great armies from the south, representing the millions of Africa, will pour into the battle arena. Other great armies from the north, representing Russia and Europe, will descend on Palestine. Climaxing the struggle will be millions of men from the Orient, led by Red China, who will cross the Euphrates River and join the fray. Locked in this deadly struggle, millions of men will perish in the greatest war of all history. This is what the Bible describes as Armageddon. Before the war is finally resolved and the victor determined, Jesus Christ will come back in power and glory from heaven. His coming, accompanied by millions of angels and saints, is described in graphic terms in Revelation 19. Coming as the King of kings and judge of the world, He will destroy the contending armies and bring in His own kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth” (John F. And John E. Walvoord, *Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis*, p. 21).
 - c. “Writers of this school uniformly consider the Beast to be the personal anti-christ of the last days and think that his army will be a literal military force, brought to the land of Palestine for warfare against the Jews, who will by that time have repossessed the land” (Albertus Pieters, *Studies in the Revelation of St. John*, p. 169).
 - d. “Fleshly Israel will pass through a seven year tribulation consummated in the battle of Armageddon, after which they will turn to God” (Orlin L. Mankamer, *The Battle of Armageddon*, p. 58).
4. This lesson will show that Revelation 16 does not have reference to a future physical battle prior to a literal kingdom of Christ upon the earth.

I. Some Salient Points to Understanding the Text

- A. The book of Revelation was written to saints who were in a severe tribulation because of their stand for the truth (Revelation 1:9).

1. The focus of the letter was:
 - a. Victory over that tribulation if they remained faithful.
 - b. That the persecuting forces would suffer defeat.
 2. Any interpretation of the book which eliminates the saints of chapter 1:9 by nineteen centuries has to be false.
 - a. The things of Revelation were to “shortly come to pass” (ch. 1:1).
 - b. How would the saints of John’s day receive any comfort from something that would occur over 1900 years later?
- B. The book of Revelation was written in highly figurative and symbolic language.
1. Since numbers, characters and events are portrayed in symbolic terms, extreme care must be taken in determining the meaning of the text.
 2. A point of hermeneutics: One should not build a religious doctrine by literalizing symbolic language for such produces conflict with other clear teachings of the New Testament Scriptures.
- C. The kingdom of Christ has already been established.
1. Any religious teaching which speaks of some future battle prior to the setting up of Christ’s kingdom is out of harmony with Scripture.
 2. Any view looking for a future establishment of Christ’s kingdom must be rejected.
- D. Consistent application.
1. The text in Revelation 16 mentions five things: frogs, a dragon, a beast, a false prophet and Armageddon.
 2. There must be a consistent application of all things mentioned in the text.
 - a. Frogs (v. 13). Literal? Or a figure of speech describing those in opposition to God?
 - b. Dragon (v. 13).
 - 1) Also mentioned in chapter 12:3 where it is described as having 7 heads, 10 horns, 7 crowns on its heads and a tail that could reach one-third of the stars in heaven.
 - 2) Literal? A figure of speech describing the devil (12:9).
 - c. Beast (v. 13).
 - 1) Mentioned in chapter 13:1-10 where it is described as having 7 heads and 10 horns and its power is described as a leopard, bear and lion.
 - 2) Literal? A figure representing the Roman empire or Roman rule.
 - d. False prophet (v. 13).
 - 1) The second beast mentioned in chapter 13:11-18 and 19:20.
 - 2) It had 2 horns like a lamb and the voice of a dragon.
 - 3) Literal? A figure symbolic of religious error which at that time involved paganism and Caesar, emperor, worship.
 - e. Armageddon (v. 16).
 - 1) The only occasion where it is mentioned in the Bible.
 - 2) If all the other things in the text are figures of speech, it is inconsistent to view Armageddon as a literal battle at a literal location.

II. An Analysis of Revelation 16

- A. This text depicts two classes of combatants:
 - 1. The forces of righteousness made up of God's people who are kings (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9).
 - 2. The forces of unrighteousness (vv. 13-14).
- B. The setting.
 - 1. God's forces come from the "sunrising," the east (Revelation 7:1-2).
 - a. The term denotes a region of light and hope.
 - b. They challenge the three "unclean spirits" or anti-Christian powers coming out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet.
 - 2. The origin of the three unclean spirits indicates their nature.
 - a. They represent the spirit of infidelity in the world and false religion.
 - b. They are of the "whole world."
- C. The warning (v. 15): "Behold, I am coming as a thief."
 - 1. Such a coming is unexpected.
 - 2. To the unrighteous: To be overthrown.
 - 3. To the righteous: To keep themselves in readiness.
- D. The coming of the Lord seen in Revelation 19:19-21 and 21:8.
 - 1. The victory of truth.
 - 2. The overthrow of the beast, the false prophet and their forces by a sudden stroke.
 - 3. Their punishment is to continue "day and night" forever.
- E. In summary.
 - 1. Armageddon is a symbol foretelling the complete victory of the forces of right over the forces of evil.
 - 2. "It is a vivid picture of a complete victory, an entire conquest, that we have here; and all the imagery of war and battle is employed to give it life. This is the symbol. The thing symbolized is obviously the complete victory of the Son of God over all the hosts of wickedness. Only a single hint of this signification is afforded by the language of the description, but that is enough. On two occasions we are carefully told that the sword by which the victory is won proceeds out of the mouth of the conqueror. We are not to think, as we read, of any literal war or manual fighting; therefore, the conquest is wrought by the spoken word—in short by preaching of the gospel" (Pieters, p. 277).
 - 3. v. 16. "*And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew, Har-Magedon.*" John resumes his narrative which had been interrupted by the parenthetical warning of verse 15. The demon spirits had gone to the kings of the whole world 'to gather them together unto the war' (v. 14); 'and they gathered them into the place called Har-Magedon.' This leads to the conclusion that Har-Magedon, more familiarly known as Armageddon, after the KJV, is the locale where the war is to take place. The text only says they were gathered; it says nothing of the battle itself. The battle and its results are reserved for chapter 19.
Great mystery and obscurity surrounds the name Har-Magedon (Armageddon), which means 'Mount of Megiddo.' The Bible speaks geographically of 'Megiddo and its three heights' (Josh. 17:11), 'Megiddo and its

towns' (Judg. 1:27), 'the waters of Megiddo' (Judg. 5:19), and 'the valley of Megiddo' (II Chron. 35:22; Zech. 12:11), but makes no mention of a Mount of Megiddo. Megiddo was a strategic point in the protection of Israel and Judah, since it guarded the northern entrance to Israel. It was in this area that several decisive battles had been fought, the most memorable being that of Deborah and Barak against Jabin and Sisera of the Canaanites; a decisive victory was given Israel by Jehovah (Judg. 4, 5). It was in this valley of Esdraelon (Jezreel), 'west of the hill of Moreh,' that Gideon's three hundred men defeated and drove out the Midianites, another decisive battle determined by Jehovah (Judg. 7:1). Saul and Jonathan were slain at the eastern extremity of the plain (I Sam. 31 :1-6); and it was at Megiddo that Ahaziah, king of Judah, in league with Joram of Israel, died, having been slain at the command of Jehu (II Kings 9:27). King Josiah fought against Pharaoh Neco in the valley of Megiddo, where he was slain (II Kings 23:29f.; II Chron. 35:22). This proved to be a decisive battle of history in that Josiah slowed Neco in his effort to reach Haran and aid Assyria against Babylon. This delay of Neco allowed Babylon to defeat the Assyrian army, making Babylon the leading power of the east.

In view of these battles of historical significance we conclude that John used the word symbolically to describe a great decisive spiritual battle between the army of Satan and the forces of God, which would determine the fate of each. This battle was fought and won by the Lord in the complete defeat of the Roman Empire and paganism behind which Rome threw its total power (see 19:11-21). To look for a physical military battle between human armies to be fought in northern Palestine at some future date is completely without scriptural support and foreign to the spirit and purpose of Revelation" (Homer Hailey, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, pp. 336-337).

III. Some Reasons to Take Armageddon as Figurative

- A. The entire passage is highly figurative.
- B. The place of Revelation 16:12-16 in the overall vision of the book indicates that this is the climax of the conflict between God and the beasts Satan has brought up.
- C. The struggle pictured here is spiritual. That is evident from the wording used.
- D. The events which follow the call of kings to Armageddon clearly establish that this event does not mark the end of our time.
 1. There is no mention here of a coming of Christ.
 2. Life is continuing after the last plague and men still have the opportunity to blaspheme God.
- E. Whatever is being described through the figures of the two beasts had to happen within a short span of time after the writing of the book.

Conclusion

The premillennialist's view of Armageddon is contrary to that which the Lord intended to convey to the readers of the book of Revelation.

An Analysis of Revelation 20:1-6

Text: Revelation 20:1-6

Introduction

1. Revelation 20:1-6 is used by premillennialists to justify their concept of a future reign of Christ on the earth.
 - a. "This kingdom will begin in time with mortal subjects (Rev. 20:4-6), last 1,000 years, and at the end of that time some of the children of the believers who started in the kingdom will apparently prove to be unbelievers and start a rebellion against Christ and His rule. Christ will bring swift judgment upon them before the rebellion reaches the actual fighting state (Rev. 20:7-10)" (Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 177).
 - b. "The sequence is clear in the last chapters of Revelation. First there is the return of Christ at the climax of the greatest war of all time. Second, Christ separates the surviving believers from the surviving unbelievers; the unbelievers will be judged and cast off the earth (Rev. 20:1-6; cf. Matt. 25:41-46). Third, Christ establishes the milenial kingdom and the surviving believers go into it as mortals and repopulate the earth (Rev. 20:11-15; cf. Matthew 25:31-40). Fourth, at the end of a thousand years the unbelieving children rebel, Christ judges them, then He completely changes the old heaven and earth and creates a new one (Rev. 21; Isaiah 65:17; II Peter 3:8-13). This is the ultimate destiny of all persons who are redeemed by Christ" (Lindsey, p. 178).
2. The idea of a future reign of Christ on earth is the key to the very heart of this false doctrine: If there will be no earthly reign then the supposed events leading to and the happenings during it are automatically denied.
3. This lesson will especially note those things that are **not** taught in this text.

I. A General View of the Book of Revelation

- A. The book is difficult to understand because of:
 1. Figurative language and its symbols.
 2. The apocalyptic method.
- B. The introduction to the book (ch. 1:1-6).
 1. The book is addressed to the seven churches of Asia (v. 1).
 2. Two facts of special interest.
 - a. "Show unto his servants things which must *shortly* come to pass" (v. 1).
 - b. "He sent and *signified* it by His angel" (v. 1).
 - 1) "Signify:" to set forth in signs or symbols.
 - 2) The symbols of *Revelation* cannot symbolize themselves, therefore, the beasts, dragons, famine, disease, etc., cannot be taken literally.

3. If the Lord had spoken literally of the persecutions, etc., facing the church, then it might have made those persecutions more frequent and severe.
 - a. He spoke in a way that the church could understand but that its enemies could not.
 - b. Consider Jesus' explanation of why He taught in parables which is found in Matthew 13:10-11.

II. An Analysis of Revelation 20

- A. Premillennialists make many bold assertions based on this chapter.
 1. "Christ will reign a thousand years."
 2. "Christ will reign on earth a thousand years."
 3. "We will reign with Christ a thousand years."
- B. Some things **not** mentioned in this chapter.
 1. The second coming of Christ.
 2. A bodily resurrection.
 3. A reign on earth.
 - a. "Souls" reigned.
 - b. Question: Can disembodied souls reign on earth?
 4. Christ will reign 1000 years (Souls reigned 1000 years).
 5. David's throne.
 6. Jerusalem or Palestine.
 7. We are not mentioned ("They" - the souls of those beheaded).
 8. Christ on earth.
- C. Further consideration of the 1000 year reign.
 1. The "reign" referred to is not Christ's but that of the souls.
 - a. They lived and reigned with Christ.
 - b. The subject is their reign.
 2. The reign of Christ could be any length.
 - a. The passage does not say.
 - b. I might live with you in Tallahassee for one year but that does not say how long you have lived in Tallahassee.
 3. If the "reign" is limited to 1000 years, how about the "lived?"
 4. Is the 1000 years literal?
 - a. If so, are the red horses, chain, rod of iron and other symbols literal?
 - b. The hermeneutical rule of consistency must be employed.
 5. Commentators on the 1000 year reign.
 - a. "The chain is not literal; one would hardly use a literal chain on a spiritual being. The thousand-year-period is no more literal than the chain. Numbers in Revelation are symbolical. 'Ten' is a complete number, and 'one thousand' is a high multiple of ten. The number is to be understood as an idea of completeness" (Ray Sommers, *Worthy Is the Lamb*, p. 204).
 - b. "The thousand years during which Satan is bound must be interpreted symbolically, as are other numbers in the book. This number is a

complete number which stands for an indetermined but full period of time (cf. Job 9:3; 33:23; Psa. 50:10; 90:4; Eccles. 6:6; 7:28; II Peter 3:8). The binding of Satan does not render him absolutely helpless or unable to operate; for he continues to be exceedingly active. He walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8); but his activity is limited, as a dog chained to a wire between two trees. He can operate only within the limited distance between the trees, and to the length of the chain from side to side. In this binding, Satan is divinely restrained from reestablishing control over nations" (Homer Hailey, *Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary*, p. 391).

D. Does the Bible teach two bodily resurrections?

1. This chapter does not even mention **one** bodily resurrection of the dead.
2. New Testament teaching regarding the literal resurrection of the dead.
 - a. John 5:28-29. One resurrection, two destinations.
 - b. John 6:40-44. The resurrection will be at the last day (John 11:24).
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
 - 1) The righteous dead are not to be pitied.
 - 2) The righteous dead are compared to the righteous living. There is no mention of the wicked dead.
3. Is the idea of a resurrection ever used in the Bible in a figurative way?
 - a. Ezekiel 37:1-4. This resurrection means that Judah was to be restored from Babylonian captivity to her own land.
 - b. Isaiah 26:13-14.
 - 1) Though certain wicked "lords" had dominion over Israel their dominion would not rise—they would not again have dominion.
 - 2) The Jehovah's Witnesses use this literally to show the wicked will never be raised from the dead (Other premillennialists, to be consistent, should too).
4. In the text the "first resurrection" evidently is used to refer to a resurrection of the cause of the beheaded saints of chapter 6:9-10.
 - a. In chapter 6 they are under the altar crying and asking how long it would be before the Lord avenged their blood.
 - b. In chapter 20:4-6 their cause had been "resurrected" and they were reigning with Christ.
 - c. Those, who through fear, lack of faith in and/or love for Christ, etc., had not been faithful "unto death" were not beheaded and would have no part in the "first resurrection" and on such the "second death" would have power.
5. Compare Revelation 20:6 with chapter 2:11.

III. The Second Coming of Christ and Its Meaning

- A. The resurrection of all the dead at the same time (John 5:28-29).
- B. The passing of everything material (2 Peter 3:9-11).
- C. The judgment of all—both the righteous and the wicked (2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12).
- D. The kingdom will then be delivered over to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:21-28).

Conclusion

1. The dangerous consequences of premillennialism are many. If premillennialism were true:
 - a. The Old Testament prophets were wrong.
 - b. God selected the wrong time.
 - c. Christ failed in His mission.
 - d. The church is nothing more than an accident.
 - e. Christ is not reigning now.
 - f. It would destroy many of the fundamental principles of the religion of Christ.
 - 1) The future reign theory denies the present reign of Christ.
 - 2) The theory, as a whole, denies that God kept His kingdom promises.
 - 3) It is impossible to believe the premillennial teaching and at the same time believe we are living in the "last days."
 - 4) It minimizes the gospel and belittles the church of Jesus Christ.
2. Do not fall prey to this false doctrine!

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